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OP

Caleb (Benj. F. Roberts) died in
Friendship (Quakertown) March 188
Rachel (Maria Roberts)

TWO YEARS BEHIND THE PLOUGH.

RETURNING FROM MARKET.

TWO YEARS

BEHIND THE PLOUGH;

OR,

THE EXPERIENCE OF A PENNSYLVANIA FARM-BOY.

GIVING

A TRUE AND FAITHFUL ACCOUNT OF LIFE ON A BUCKS COUNTY FARM AS HE FOUND IT DURING AN APPRENTICESHIP OF TWO YEARS.

"I will a round, unvarnished tale deliver."

PHILADELPHIA:
CLAXTON, REMSEN & HAFFELFINGER,
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PREFACE.

IF this book possesses any merit, it is mainly in the general truthfulness of the scenes and characters it delineates. It does not pretend to any other, nor does it lay claim to any interest beyond what may be found in the unromantic career of a farmer's boy, and the circumstances which led to his becoming such. It deals neither with scenes of love nor exciting adventures; but to readers to whom the hard realities of life may afford greater interest than its romances, the story may be found not unworthy of perusal.

Since the period at which it dates, many of the habits and customs of the Bucks County farmers have changed with the other changes going on in the world, and due to a great extent to the introduction of railways in their neighborhood. Their big, white-topped wagons are no longer to be seen

lumbering along the roads to and from the city, and crowding the inn-yards on market-days, as in old times; nor do the once familiar faces and dress of their owners attract the attention of wayfarers on the busy thoroughfare on which those inns stand.

Their produce now finds a ready sale either at the various stations of the railways which intersect their county, or through the medium of store-keepers or agents in the city, to whom it is sent by that conveyance.

The great yard of the "Red Lion" is no longer a yard, but a modern-built market-house now occupies the space once filled by rows of country wagons. The inn itself and the ramping lion on its sign-board in front still remain, materially unaltered, and apparently unaffected by the changing times.

The patient, plodding oxen which at one time formed so conspicuous a feature of nearly all Bucks County farms, and which play so prominent a part in my story, are no longer seen there. They have long since fallen into disuse, and a yoke of them now on any of the roads would excite as much curiosity as an old-fashioned stage-coach, or one of the big "Conestoga" wagons formerly in such general favor.

It has thus seemed to me that a story from real

life, giving a description of men and things as they were at the time I write of, might be worth the reading. Hence this humble attempt to do what my heart has long been set upon, but which for want of time I have only just been able to accomplish.

THE AUTHOR.

OCTOBER 1, 1877.

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TWO YEARS BEHIND THE PLOUGH.

CHAPTER I.

A PLEASANT SURPRISE, AND WHAT IT LED TO.

"SONNY, would thee like to go to the country?"

Time can never efface the thrill of pleasure which went through my young heart when I, a lad of scarcely fourteen summers, received this unceremonious salutation. Returning from an errand on a pleasant afternoon in May, 18—, in the city of Philadelphia, I was attracted for a moment by the beautiful, garden-like cemetery of the Episcopal church on Arch Street; and it was whilst I stood peering through the railings of its iron gateway that the question, "Sonny, would thee like to go to the country?" came to me with a suddenness that, whilst it surprised, also delighted me. For at that time I was full of the enthusiasm — so common among city-bred boys — for a country, and more especially a farming, life. My knowledge of that life was entirely ideal, for, with the exception of an occasional visit to the dairy-farm of the man who supplied my mother with milk, when I was a child, I had seen nothing of it. But my mind was full of pleasing impressions obtained from school and other books,

filled with beautiful illustrations and stories of country life — of charming scenes of hay-making, harvesting, fruit-gathering, and cider-distilling. My imagination had pictured the simple-minded and honest country folk always revelling in these pleasant and healthful occupations, amidst open fields and quiet woods, with all their picturesque variety of birds, animals, and flowers.

My bias for a country life was also kept alive by constantly seeing, on market-days, the innumerable wagons lined with sweet-smelling straw and hay, and laden with the productions of the surrounding country. Many a time I had gone — unknown to my friends — and offered myself to the owners of these wagons as a farm-boy; but my puny appearance must have been against me, for I never got any encouragement from them. So, finding there was but little chance of my ever becoming a farmer, I yielded, though very reluctantly, to the advice of my mother and friends to accept a situation in the counting-house of Mr. Mason, a merchant in the city, who took a special interest in me, and offered me a home in his own family. It was just when I had entered on my probationary term with Mr. Mason, and whilst a mere glimmer of hope of a country life was still clinging to me, that I was thus unexpectedly accosted by the stranger. My duty in such a case was clear enough, viz., to say I should like to go to the country, but that I was otherwise engaged, and could not leave the city. But this sudden opening to the very thing my heart was set upon was altogether too good to be resisted; and so, without giving Mr. Mason or any one else a moment's consideration, I promptly answered:

"Yes; I should like to go, very much."

The stranger was a man of thirty-five, or thereabouts —

tall, good-looking, and with an honest though somewhat severe expression of face. He was dressed in a home-spun suit of linsey-woolsey, and wore a black hat, rather the worse for age and dust.

Eyeing me for a moment as if in doubt whether, after all, I was just the sort of boy for a farmer, he said:

"And where does thee live?"

I told him where I lived, and that I was living with my mother.

"Does thee think thee mother will let thee go?"

Still deeming it unsafe to say anything about my other engagement, I answered that I thought she would let me go.

"Very well, then; let 's go and see her. I ain't got no time to lose, nuther; so we must be hurryin'."

A quarter of an hour's walk brought us to my mother's door. The farmer asked me many questions on the way as to my past and present life, habits, and occupation, all of which I answered, except about the one thing now uppermost in my mind, and which began to give me a good deal of uneasiness. A few minutes more and the simple story of our chance meeting at the burying-ground was told by the farmer in his own plain, unpolished language. It was very easy to be seen, by his awkward movements and uncouth manners and speech, that he was an illiterate man; but with an implicit faith in the honesty and goodness of all country folk, neither my mother nor I attached any importance to what we thought might be only their natural characteristics.

He informed us that his name was Caleb Thomas, and he lived near Friendship, in Bucks County, forty odd miles from the city, whither he came four or five times a year to sell the produce of his farm. Being about to

return home that afternoon, he wished to take back with him a boy for general work on the place, and to teach him farming. Seeing me, and believing me to be a boy likely to suit him, he had accosted me in the way already mentioned.

Although there was nothing in Caleb Thomas's dress to indicate it, it was easy to be seen that he was a Quaker. In our eyes, this was greatly in his favor; for living among such numbers of that sect in Philadelphia, we had learned to respect them for their uprightness and gentleness, and never dreamed that one of them could be aught else.

"Well, Hester," he said, addressing my mother by her Christian name, which he had learned from me, "what does thee think about it?"

"Why, Mr. Thomas, I don't see how it is possible for Henry to go with you. He is under an engagement —as I suppose he has told you—with a gentleman in the city, to learn his business. The matter is all arranged, and he has already begun his duties there."

"No; he never told me nuthin' about that there, or thelst I would n't a' taken all this trouble," the farmer replied, turning as he did so with a slightly reproachful look towards me.

Feeling that it was my turn to speak, I said: "Well, I did n't say anything about it, because I have all along been wanting to go to the country, and I did n't want to lose this chance. I don't believe Mr. Mason will care much whether I go with him or not."

"Then if thee wants to go along a' me, and thee mother haint no objection, hed n't thee better go and see what that there man 's got to say about it? Does he live fur from here?"

"Suppose, Mr. Thomas, Henry should go with you; what do you propose to do for him?"

"Well, I'll take him on trial for six weeks or two months, till I come to town agin. Then if we both like one another well enough, I'll take him as an apprentice for two year. He haint no fear about bein' well treated as long as he's a good boy and behaves hisself. If he stays with me the two year or more, I'll find him in clothes and send him to school half a quarter every winter. And when his time is out I'll give him a good freedom-suit of clothes. But if we don't git on well together, I'll fetch him back the next time I come to town. But there's three things I'll never allow any boy of mine to do, and that there's lyin', swearin', and stealin'. If I ever ketched him at anything of that sort I'd certainly switch him."

This last declaration was made with considerable emphasis, as though intended for my special benefit, but as the offences named by him had never yet been brought against me, I was not greatly terrified by what he said. I suspect that Caleb, like many of his class, had but a poor opinion of the morals of town-bred boys.

My mother was, from the beginning of the interview, decidedly opposed to the proposition, and did her best to dissuade me from entering into it. She pointed out the probable advantages that such a patronage as Mr. Mason's would be to me, and the little I should gain, and the loss of valuable time from an apprenticeship of a couple of years with the farmer. But her strength of mind was not equal to her discretion, for, seeing I was inexorable, she gave her consent, on two conditions. The first was that Mr. Mason should assent to my going,

and the other that Mr. Thomas's references should prove satisfactory.

As my mother afterwards said, she thought that either a few weeks' experience would cure me of the passion, and make me more content with my lot in town, or that at the end of the two years Mr. Mason — as afterwards proved — would be willing to take me back again. It was thus arranged that the three of us should call on that gentleman together, as the first step; and, as the farmer was much pressed for time, it was thought desirable that I should pack up a few clothes to take with me, so that, in the event of Mr. Mason's consenting, I should go with him direct to the "Red Lion" market-yard, where he had left his wagon.

Mr. Mason was seen, and, finding my heart was set on the scheme, he offered no obstacles to it, but, on the contrary, assured us of his willingness to receive me back again at the end of the two years, if even I remained in the country so long.

So far, all went well enough. My mother now wished to satisfy herself about Mr. Thomas's character and respectability, and proposed that whilst he and I went to the inn-yard together, she would go — accompanied by a cousin who lived near by — to the same place by another route. The farmer had already told us that he was well known to the proprietor of the "Red Lion" inn, who would give any information needed about him. So, after a most friendly parting with Mr. Mason, we bent our steps towards the market-yard, on Second Street.

A thousand times since I have looked back to that scene at the graveyard, and tried to imagine what would have been my fate — what sort of a part I should have played in the world — but for that accidental meeting with Far-

mer Thomas. For it was that small straw that changed the whole current of my after life, and sent me adrift upon a wider ocean, — but whether for better or for worse it is impossible to say.

Our route lay through the line of market-houses, which at that time stretched nearly a mile along the middle of the fine, wide street which took its name from them. As it was not market-day there, a few of the many stalls, not now occupied by their legitimate owners, were in the possession of small venders of ice cream, lemonade, oyster soup, and other inexpensive luxuries, suited to the wants of the poorer classes. At one of these stalls Caleb now stopped to regale himself with a bowl of oyster soup, leaving me to find what refreshment I could from the fumes of the savory mess, as it took its rapid flight down his throat.

"Now, Henry, let 's push along, or they 'll think I 'm lost."

"They," as I had already learned, referred to his wife and sister, who were left to dispose of their remaining stock of butter, eggs, potatoes, etc.

The farmer, kindly relieving me of my bundle of clothes, now led the way at a quick pace, feeling stimulated, no doubt, by his feast of oysters, and a fresh quid of tobacco afterwards thrust into his mouth. The crowded thoroughfare on which the "Red Lion" stood was soon reached, when, remembering, or fancying, that he needed shaving, he darted across the street, and, putting his head into a barber's shop, loudly inquired the price of a shave.

"Twelve and a half cents," was the man's reply.

"Say ten cents and I 'll come in."

But the offer only provoked a growl from the offended barber and a general titter among the half-dozen cus-

tomers, who sat smothered in hair or lather in the room. Caleb himself seemed nowise put out by this failure to come to terms, but was very likely pleased to think the man's refusal had saved him his ten cents.

The "Red Lion" was one of two large market-yards situated on Second Street, in which the farmers of Bucks and Montgomery Counties congregated twice a week to sell their produce. The other was the "Black Horse," which stood near by. Mondays and Fridays, or Second-days and Sixth-days, according to the nomenclature of the Quakers, who attended there in large numbers, were market-days. Surrounding the yards were long ranges of stables, and in front, facing the street, were the hostelries, for the accommodation of such of the farmers as required them. On market-days these yards were crowded with white-canvas covered wagons, besmeared with mud and dust, betokening long journeys over country roads, and surrounded by crowds of hucksters, housekeepers, and others in search of what they wanted. Though the trafficking was conducted chiefly in English, there was always a large admixture of the "Low Dutch," which the Pennsylvania Dutchmen, though born in the State, still cling to with so much love. Altogether, the scenes at these yards at such times were exceedingly animated and interesting.

When we reached the "Red Lion" most of the wagons had left, or were leaving, the yard for their distant homes, for the day was waning fast. My mother, having satisfied herself as to Farmer Thomas's respectability, by an inquiry at the inn office, met us as we approached, and then and there, to my inexpressible delight, committed me to his care. Taking an affectionate leave of me, and exacting a promise from me to write to her soon, she departed,

fondly hoping that a few weeks would cure me of my infatuation for the country.

Before going to the stable, Caleb went in search of his wife, whom he at length found, with his sister, in one of the sitting-rooms of the inn. Having grown impatient at his long absence, they had been wandering among the shops and just then returned, in not the most amiable of moods, to wait his arrival. When we entered the room, the wife, checking her asperity on seeing me, said in a tone of forced mildness: "Why, Caleb, where *has* thee been all this time?"

"I thought thee knowed I was goin' to look for a boy," he answered, with an appeasing smile, and gently scratching his head. Then pointing to me he said, by way of introduction: "Rachel, this is Henry Sellers; he 's a-goin' home along with us," upon which the wife held out her hand, and, with a face beaming with kindness, said:

"So thee 's goin' with us, is thee, Henry? Thee wants to be a farmer's boy, does thee?"

To which I answered "Yes," and that I always had wanted to be one. Then, after a few inquiries as to the disposal of their wares, the purchase of groceries, etc., all of which were answered by Rachel in a satisfactory manner, Caleb said:

"I guess we 'd better take somethin' to eat now before we start, hed n't we? Has thee got the wallet, Rachel?"

"Yes; here it is. Abby and me took our supper some time ago. Thee and Henry had better set down and take yours, for you must be very hungry."

"Well, Henry can go ahead and eat his 'n, whilst I go and look after the horses."

Rachel then placed the contents of the wallet — a pillow-case, closed at the ends, and having a hole in the side for the passage, in and out, of the victuals — on the table, and kindly pressed me to eat.

Chunks of very fat salt pork, rye bread, cheese, and slices of apple-pie were the substantial viands which, together with an occasional cup of coffee, formed the diet of the party during their absence from home, which lasted usually about three days.

These things, I thought, are all very well and convenient for travelling; but, of course, in the country there will be lots of good things to eat — delicacies that the country abounds in — poultry, game, fresh eggs, cream, butter, fruits, and what not.

The kindly and simple manners of Rachel and Abby Thomas at once gained my confidence and attachment, whilst they seemed almost equally pleased with me. Both women were about two or three and thirty, and decidedly Quakerish in looks, dress, and manners. Rachel was slender and shapely in form, and with a face that was soft and pretty, and only wanting education to make it refined. The other was short and plump in person, and her face wore an expression of great good humor and simplicity.

Caleb soon returned to the room, and having rapidly dispatched his meal, the food was replaced in the wallet — the meat and cheese in one end and the pie and bread in the other, for convenience of carrying across the shoulder; and then, turning to me, he said:

"Now, Henry, if thee 's got enough we 'll go and put the horses in. 'Bite sharp and swaller quick' — that 's my motto."

The horses having been geared and fastened to the wagon, two sacks of provender were placed, one on top of the other, athwart the front, to form a seat for the three persons, whilst I squatted down on the straw in front of them.

Nor must I omit to mention "Aunt Peggy," an old woman with one eye, who had taken her annual walk to Philadelphia, to purchase a barrel of salt mackerel and a few household necessaries. The hind part of the wagon was occupied by Peggy and her barrel, by permission of Caleb, who, by way of charity, carried them home without charge.

Twilight had already set in when we left the "Red Lion;" and passing along through street after street, already alight with their myriads of lamps, we soon emerged from the fair city, and, taking the narrow by-roads, in order to escape the turnpike tolls of the highways, wended our slow and weary way towards the village of Germantown, our resting-place for the night.

All were tired and indisposed to talk much, so that, with the exception of an occasional very brief remark from one or the other, a dead silence prevailed.

To me, however, the novelty of the situation was such that I was kept wide awake, and not a sound or a movement of any kind was lost by me. Everything interested me, — the tramp of the horses' feet, the rattle of their chains, the switching of their long tails, and the rumbling noise of the wagon's wheels.

Again, after a couple of hours or so, we left the dark and lonely lanes, and found ourselves in the pretty village, where lights enough were still burning in the houses and lamps of its one long street to form a cheerful contrast to the darkness we had left behind us.

The "Bird in Hand" * tavern, in Germantown, was the common halting place for farmers returning, like ourselves, from the city markets, and requiring rest for themselves and their animals for the night. Our wagon was drawn up amidst a crowd of others in the large yard at the back, the horses were properly housed and fed, and the women of the party retired to their bedrooms. Then Caleb shouldered a sack of provender in his wagon, and led the way to the bar-room of the inn, followed by me. Though the majority of the men had taken up their quarters for the night, and lay stretched, each on his sack of horse-feed thrown upon the bare floor, there was still a lively chatter in English and Dutch filling the room, and mingling with the unmusical sounds from the sleepers on the floor.

Selecting a place between two burly Dutchmen, Caleb quietly dropped his sack, saying to me as he did so, "There, Henry; I guess he 'll be able to sleep there to-night, won't he?"

I said I had no doubt about it; but at the same time I could not help casting an uneasy glance at my two bulky neighbors, and thinking of the consequences of any untoward movement in my direction, should either lose his balance in the night and roll off his perch. But neither this fear, nor the doleful sounds and loud gabble about me could keep me, tired as I was, long awake. So, after Caleb had left me, to join his wife, with the parting injunction to "git all the sleep thee can, as we must be up and stirrin' before daylight," I placed my jacket under my head for a pillow, and before my mind had time to

* I am a little doubtful about the name of this house. It may have been one of the "Lion" family — red, white, or black — but the "Bird in Hand" was somewhere on the road.

retrace the events of the day, which led me to so strange a situation, I had joined the happy throng about me in their peaceful, if not in their noisy, slumbers.

CHAPTER II.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

NOW, Henry, jump up! jump up!" was the first thing that greeted my ears, accompanied by a startling shake, at day-dawn the next morning; and on looking up I saw my master standing over me, lantern in hand, rousing me from a sleep that defied all other disturbances.

Most of my neighbors were already astir, and making preparations for a start. Handing me the lantern, Caleb took up the sack of feed and led the way to the stables. Inside and out the horses and wagons were in various stages of readiness for their day's journey; and if any sleepiness still lingered about me, it was soon shaken off by the fresh morning air and the bustle and animation everywhere about. There was a picturesqueness in the scene that might well have roused the spirit of a much older and more experienced person than I was, and to me it was the purest enjoyment.

Leaving our horses feeding and ready for the wagon, Caleb and I joined the women inside, who, with the inexhaustible wallet and a supply of coffee from the inn kitchen before them, were already in the full enjoyment of their breakfast.

A more lovely morning than that twenty-third of May has not often been seen on earth. The sun, when it

arose, had full possession of the heavens, without a single cloud to dispute its course, whilst the air was laden with the sweet perfumes of an early summer morning.

The good citizens of Germantown and Chestnut Hill, whose pretty houses lined the road on either side of us for a mile or two, were still in the midst of their slumbers, knowing and caring but little about the stream of market-wagons that went slowly rumbling past their doors.

All our little party were cheerful, friendly, and pleasant, save only old Peggy, who, passive and silent, sat in the rear of the wagon, keeping quiet guard over her precious charge, and whom no one seemed to think it necessary to notice. The poor old soul was far too grateful for the *lift* given to her and her fish to think of troubling her friends in any other way. And during our stoppages she was always invisible until the wagon was ready for a fresh start — getting in and out in some mysterious way known only to herself.

To me the journey, under such agreeable circumstances — seated on my straw couch behind the two fine horses, watching their graceful movements, and cheered by the balmy air and the songs of birds — was simply rapture!

If this be only a foretaste of the country, I thought, what must the reality itself be? So far, it was just what I had always pictured to myself in my boyish dreams, and now I knew I was right. How I did wish, too, that my mother could see me! How quickly she would change her mind!

I could not help wondering, too, at the good fortune that threw Caleb Thomas in my way so opportunely the day before, and compared my happy lot with what it might have been but for this stroke of luck. Then, again, I had fallen in with such good, kind-hearted people, whose

very appearance was an assurance of good treatment and a happy home — honest, simple-minded Quakers, who knew no guile or deceit.

The two women especially, in their prim bonnets and smiling faces, I thought very lovable and motherly, though I had by this time learned that Abby was not a member of our household, but was only travelling for her own convenience.

After a few hours' steady progress, always in a walk, we had left Germantown far behind, and got fairly in the country, keeping mainly to the turnpike-road, but diverging occasionally in order to escape the tolls, as on the previous day.

Most of the wagons that left the "Bird in Hand" with us had dispersed, some to take other roads, some to drop behind, and others again, less careful of their teams, to shoot ahead of us. But each one travelling our way seemed to be known to our party, and its appearance was sure to draw forth remarks concerning the owner, his family, or his affairs. Now and then, as a couple of us came abreast of each other, heads were thrust out of each wagon, and a brisk colloquy took place between them, mostly about the markets, and ending with mutual inquiries about their respective families.

Having but little to talk about themselves, it was not long before my friends turned their attention to me, the women more especially asking me many questions about myself and my previous life, and listening with great interest to the simple account of my boyish adventures. Caleb was more reserved, and talked but little at any time. In this particular scene he took no part, but, probably thinking it not prudent to encourage too much freedom in me, left me to be drawn out by the others. In

fact, the impression was already beginning to dawn upon me that he was not likely at any time to err on the side of too much softness.

People who had seen nothing of the world themselves, whose travels had never extended beyond a market journey to the city, and who had never put foot on board of ship, steamboat, or railway-car in their lives, could not fail to be pleased with the story of my childish escapades. How, when a boy of eleven or twelve, such was the fascination to me of a steamboat leaving our wharves, that I could not resist the temptation to desert home and school, and join the throng of happy passengers in their journey, without a penny in my pocket, and with no definite idea as to where I should go, or what I should do.

Sometimes it would be the New York, and at others the Baltimore boat; and as my diminutive person, and the careless way then in vogue of collecting fares were my chief protection on boat, rail, or canal, I was always sure of a passage through to those cities. How that, when there, I would seek the house of some family friend or relative, and find refuge with them until an opportunity offered of sending me back to my mother; or else, leaving them as suddenly as I came, would either manœuvre my own way back, or extend my wanderings to some more distant point, trusting to luck, which never forsook me, for food and lodging.

This recital, and the many questions and comments it elicited, helped to while away the forenoon, which had now become uncomfortably warm, and rendered still more unpleasant by the clouds of dust raised by the horses and wagon, and which at times enveloped us all.

At noon we drew up at a roadside inn for rest and refreshment to ourselves and our animals. For the last

time, the contents of the wallet were spread before us on the table of the bar-room, and ample justice was done to them by all concerned.

As water was our only beverage, and the food both of ourselves and horses our own, I have always been puzzled to know how the landlord of the inn was paid for his accommodation. Gratuities were not at that time popular with the farmers, whatever they may be now, so that neither the innkeeper nor his men had anything to expect from that source.

Pointing to a common colored print that hung on the wall near by us, Caleb said to me:

"Henry, I want him to look at that there picter and tell me if he sees a man anywheres about it."

"Yes, I see Napoleon," was my prompt answer, as I at once descried the famous general, standing with folded arms and cocked hat on his head, bolt upright between two trees, whose trunks and branches were so arranged by the cunning artist as to present a shadowy outline of his well-known martial figure.

As this wonderful picture had been for many years a standing puzzle to the customers of the house, my own discovery of the artistic curiosity gained me general credit for uncommon sharpness and intelligence, especially when, in answer to Rachel's challenge, I assured them I had never before seen it.

Once more seated in our wagon, the day being too hot to tempt any one to walk, we began the last stage of our journey. Fatigue had by this time taken the edge off the novelty, if not the pleasure of the thing, and I was now looking forward with some impatience to the next change that would bring us to our home — our country home — and rest. What sort of a place it would be, who

I should see there, and what I should have to do when there, were questions now agitating my mind.

The cheerfulness and gaiety of the morning had given place to a dull and drowsy spirit in the afternoon, during which but little was said by any of the party; what little was said had reference to home matters and persons. The names of Joshua, of Martha, and of Dick were now and then mentioned, which led me somehow to connect those individuals with the farm. Now something was said, in a sort of undertone, about hoeing corn, and other mysterious farming operations requiring early attention, some of which things I now heard of for the first time, and which set me wondering whether I should have to take any part in them, and what.

After a long silence, during which my master showed signs of sleepiness, and leaving his horses to find their own way, Rachel, addressing her nodding husband, said:

"Caleb, why don't thee let Henry take the reins? I'll show him the way." Whereupon the reins were, to my great delight, handed to me, and Caleb gave himself up to sleep forthwith.

"Thee must learn to drive, Henry, or thee'll never make a farmer," Rachel said. "Thee must git Dick to learn thee how to drive oxen, too. Would thee like to drive oxen?"

I told her I thought I should, and then inquired who Dick was.

"Dick is my brother Joshua's boy. He is about thy age, and lives with us on our place. He is a city boy, like thee, and has ben with us sence he was eight years old."

At length, after ascending Forest Hill, over a road which threatened, at almost every turn of the wheels,

not only to dislocate every bone of my body, but to wreck the big, springless wagon itself, as it jumped in and out of deep ruts, or thumped against heavy stones, we came in view of the homestead. Half an hour or so more, after dropping Peggy and sister Abby at their respective homes on the way, I found myself — stiff, weary, and sleepy — landed at the door of my new home in the country.

If first impressions are the most lasting, they are not always the most pleasing. This was especially so in my case, for nothing could well be more discouraging than the first appearance of the mean-looking shanty — for it was little better than one — that was to be my home. A whitewashed log-house, with three small rooms on each of the two floors, and a cellar, used as a dairy, was the unattractive residence of the Thomases. A small, badly-kept vegetable garden, which separated it from the main road, and a rickety, little wooden building, dignified with the name of a *barn*, near by, were the only other noticeable features about the place.

From this tiny mansion, a narrow lane, about one hundred yards long, and shaded on either side by fruit trees, led to the main buildings of the farm, occupied by Joshua Ball, his sister Martha, and their boy Dick. These buildings consisted of a long and substantially built stone-house of one story, shaded by tall sycamore trees, a large barn, and various other out-buildings, wherein the greater part of the live and dead stock of the place was kept, as well as the many other belongings of a tolerably thrifty farm.

There was no pretence of ornament or beauty about the place — nothing to please the eye or relieve the dull, unvarying geometrical fields, enclosed here with post-and-

rail, and there with the still uglier Virginia snake fences. Utility and economy were the order of the day here, as well as on all other farms in this populous county, and everything else had to give way to them.

Our wagon was met at the door by sister Martha, who had looked after the house in Rachel's absence, and prepared for her return by a comfortable supper, all ready and waiting.

Looking at me with a patronizing smile, as I entered the kitchen with an armful of things from the wagon, she said:

"Why, Rachel, who's this thee's brought home with thee?"

"This is Henry Sellers. He wants to be a farmer, and so we've brought him home along with us from the city. Putt the things down here, Henry."

"Thee looks tired, Henry; thee'll be glad of some supper, won't thee, after so long a journey?"

"Yes; I am a little tired," I answered, and then returned to the wagon for another load of groceries and empty firkins. By this time Joshua had come up, and taking no notice of me, beyond a hasty glance from the opposite side of the wagon where he stood, he hailed his brother-in-law:

"Well, Cale, thee's got back again, eh? What sort of a market has thee had?"

The question was answered with Caleb's usual brevity, and an enumeration of the prices obtained for the several articles given to the other.

Joshua, like Caleb, was a man of very few words; was rough and brusque in manner and voice, and gave a stranger the impression of a very cross-grained, bearish fellow. But I believe his roughness was mostly on the

surface; for underneath it all he had a good heart, and was at times very sociable, and even funny. Caleb, on the other hand, though soft of voice, was dogged and tyrannical in spirit, and seldom allowed himself to bend, except to his wife, of whom he was very fond, or in the presence of strangers, when he was good-natured and smirking, even to silliness.

The two men were about to proceed with the horses and wagon towards the barn, followed by me, when Rachel came to the little front gate and said to her husband:

"Caleb, if thee don't want Henry, had n't thee better leave him here? He must be very tired."

To which proposal my master at once assented, but, being curious to see something more of the place, I said I wished to go along with the others, and followed them accordingly to the barn.

On entering the barn-yard, my attention was attracted to a short, chubby boy, standing with outstretched legs on the dung-hill, and his eyes fixed intently on me as I approached. His only clothing was a coarse, striped shirt, open at the neck, a pair of colored duck trousers, rolled up to his knees and held up by a leather strap across one shoulder, and a small straw hat on his head. On his feet were neither stockings nor shoes, but in their place was a thick coating of dirt. He was the very picture of sturdy independence and juvenile impudence. I at once put him down as the boy Dick of whom I had heard Rachel speak, which was soon confirmed by his master, who asked:

"Dick, did thee take them horses down to the lower field, as I told thee?"

"Yes."

"And putt the hopples on the mare?"

"Yes."

"Well, now go and git them there things in the wagon, and take them into the house."

"Cale, did thee bring me a letter from my mother, or anything?" the boy asked, as he started to do his master's bidding.

"No, Dick; I had n't time to go to thee mother's this time; I was too busy."

Neither master seemed to think that etiquette called for any introduction of their boys; so, without taking any further notice of me, Dick went gloomily about his business, musing over his disappointment about the letter, and not improbably also over the new arrival, and wondering how the thing was going to work; for up to that time he was the only boy there, and, as such, a sort of privileged character.

The work at the barn being over, Caleb and I returned to the house, where we found the two sisters discussing the events of the three days past, over a solid supper of boiled salt pork, cabbage, potatoes, bread, pie, apple-butter, and tea. After a refreshing wash from a tin basin on a bench at the back door, we joined the others at table.

"Now, Henry, I want him to eat plenty, else he 'll never git strong," Caleb said, as he placed before me a huge plateful of the table delicacies.

This admonition was at once seconded by both Rachel and Martha, who, seeing me quail before the chunk of greasy pork, told me if I wanted to be tough and hearty, like farmers' boys, I must learn to eat meat. Though my dainty city stomach rebelled against it then, I nevertheless squared the account by a vigorous attack on the other

edibles. Not so, however, with Caleb, who set me a wholesome example by swallowing slice after slice of the nearly unmixed fat with a relish and a business-like seriousness that was curious, if not edifying, to look at.

This eventful day was at length brought to a close by the departure of Martha for her own home. Bidding Caleb and Rachel good-night — with a pressing injunction to the latter not to hurry up in the morning, but to leave the milking to her — she turned to me with what was intended for a smile, and said:

"Good-night, Henry. Now go to bed and sleep well, so as thee can git up bright and early, and come and help us do the milkin'."

If my first acquaintance with Rachel was prepossessing, the very reverse was the case with regard to her sister. She was much the older of the two — was small, thin, wiry, sallow, and quick and restless in her movements. She had a shrill, sharp voice, and an inquisitive, meddlesome spirit, that forced its way everywhere and into everything about. From the first this foxy little woman inspired me with a dread and dislike that increased the longer I knew her.

CHAPTER III.

SOME EARLY EXPERIENCE AND USEFUL LESSONS.

BUCKS is one of the three counties in the State of Pennsylvania first settled by William Penn, the great apostle of Quakerism, and his followers, two centuries ago; and being one of the oldest, is one of the most populous and best cultivated in the entire State. It takes its name from Buckinghamshire, in England, from whence Penn and many of his fellow-colonists came. Ever since that time the county has been one of the strongholds of Quakerism on the American continent.

Being purely agricultural, it possesses no large towns or manufacturing centres within its borders, and as its lands have been held chiefly by the descendants of the original Quaker, together with a small admixture of Dutch, colonists, it has offered but little inducement to the hordes of emigrants from Europe who, of late years, have been invading many other parts of the United States, to cast their lots there.

Hence the inhabitants had, up to the time I write about, retained their primitive habits in a remarkable degree. About Friendship, the farmers were thrifty and moderately prosperous, their farms ranging from fifty to two hundred and fifty acres in extent.

The farm on which fortune had thrown me consisted of one hundred and forty acres, thirty of which were timber, from whence fire-wood and rails for fences were obtained, the remainder being arable and grass land. The property had been left to executors for the joint benefit of Joshua and the two sisters, by their late

father, subject to certain claims, to cancel which all their energies were now bent. The labor required and the implements and stock for working the farm, were provided in equal proportions by Joshua and Martha on the one part, and Caleb and Rachel on the other.

All were looking forward anxiously to a realization of the estate, and a division of the legacy by the executors; for it soon became apparent, even to me, that the joint-stock arrangement was not working any too smoothly and well, and that a separation of the two families was a consummation much to be desired.

Another fact, which more particularly concerned myself, soon became equally apparent to me, and that was that all my city notions about the delightful prodigality of the farmer's table were wrong, and needed correction; there was no prodigality at all to be seen. Turkeys, geese, and fowls, that had always formed a part of our common diet at home, and which I foolishly supposed would be as plentiful as potatoes or blackberries here, were guarded and cherished with religious care for the city market, and only twice or thrice a year did any of them make their appearance on our table. Butter and eggs, when not reserved for the same destination, were sent to the village store and exchanged for groceries of equal value.

Economy ruled everything on our place with a very tight hand. "A penny saved is a penny yearnt" was a favorite maxim there, and always scrupulously acted on by all alike.

This wholesome rule was soon brought home to my youthful understanding in more ways than one. Finding on the second day after my arrival that my breakfast coffee lacked its accustomed sugar, I intimated the same to my mistress, supposing the ridiculous omission would

be promptly set right by her; but, after a little private telegraphing between the two, I was mildly informed that "'The doctor says sweetnin' in coffee ain't good for us, Henry."

At the evening meal, in like manner, I was told, on the same high authority, that milk in tea was equally prejudicial to health! So, as there was no help for it, I soon fell in with the custom of drinking my coffee and tea without those dangerous concomitants, and thus, I hope, added my mite to the family savings.

Another useful lesson I found I had soon to learn, and that was never to eat more at a meal than you need. Though not one of the accepted maxims of the family, and though opposed to my master's request to "eat plenty and git strong," it was nevertheless made as clear as daylight to me that even a good appetite must have its limits. Early rising, fresh air, and hard work were doing wonders in the way of developing an appetite that might, without much exaggeration, be called omnivorous. To keep it within safe and reasonable bounds, a very simple but effectual plan was adopted. At breakfast and supper a slice of bread was cut in two pieces and stood on edge before me. A further supply was never refused; but when asked for, the loaf was slowly raised by Caleb to his chest with an effort, and with a peculiar movement of the eyebrows that plainly said, "I thought I had given thee enough." A slice of smaller dimensions was then cut off and given to me.

I never had the courage to try his patience by a second application, though many times tempted by my appetite to do so.

Our breakfast consisted invariably of coffee, rye bread, cold apple or other pie, and salt pork, cut in thin slices

and stewed in milk. By an ingenious and economical device of Martha's, the coffee was made of a mixture of real coffee and sweet potato peelings, roasted and ground.

With the exception of tea in the place of coffee, supper, as the evening meal was called, was the same as breakfast. Boiled salt pork, potatoes, cabbage, pie, and bread formed the dinner, with coffee as the beverage. And, as regards these dishes, the same precaution was taken against gluttony as in the case of bread, and thus my appetite was at all times kept in a state of healthy activity.

No time whatever was lost in initiating me in the smaller mysteries of farming, such as feeding and attending to the animals, milking, chopping fire-wood, churning, and assisting in such out-door labors as were going on at that season. In these operations I was thrown much in the company of the other boy, between whom and myself a friendly feeling soon sprang up.

Though Master Dick was disposed to bounce a little, and put on airs at first, on the strength of his superior knowledge and position on the place, he soon found it prudent to make friends with the "town boy," who, though no match for him on his own ground, showed himself his superior in general intelligence and knowledge of the world.

Dick was rude and uncultivated enough, but not vicious or ill-natured. What little good breeding he brought with him from the city, when, six years before, he left his mother's home, had been nearly all rubbed off by contact with his rough master and unpolished mistress. He had adopted not only the manners and ideas of those about him, but also the Quaker phraseology, except when it suited him to drop it.

Mounted on the front of the ox-cart one day, with Dick

seated opposite, whip in hand, urging his well-broken, magnificent steers towards the woods, whither we were bound for a load of fuel, the big dog, Jerry, the inseparable companion of the oxen, following, I said:

"Look here, Dick, it seems to me it 's all work and no play here. I had no idea there was so much to be done on a farm."

"Work! why, you don't call this work, do you? Why, the work has n't begun yit. Only you wait awhile; that 's all."

"Why, have n't you any easy times at all? Work can't last all the year round."

"Oh! can't it, though! You 'll see whether it can't. We have to go to work agin at the corn in a few days and give that another hoein'. That 'll show you what work is."

"And after that?"

"After that? Why, hay-makin'; and after that agin harvestin'; and after that agin pullin' the flax. Ah, but that 'll make you squeal, my boy! Only you wait." And then giving one of his cattle a sharp cut with his whip, he bawled out, "Haw, Mike; haw, haw!"

"Well, but that can't last long," I said, more for the purpose of drawing him out than by way of opinion.

"Oh, you need n't be a bit afeared of havin' nuthin' to do. Who do you think is goin' to do the thrashin', cut the corn, husk it, hackle the flax, clean the wheat, rye, oats, and buckwheat, if we don't do it? Berry, Berry, wo, gee-e-e-e!" and then a whack at the other ox, as he finished his speech.

"And in the winter, what 's going on then?" I asked, with a faint hope that then, at least, there would be a let up to all these labors.

"The winter? well, we do a bit of everything in the winter, — cut and haul ice to fill our ice-house, cart manure, cut and haul fire-wood, split rails for fences, and whenever we 're short of work we can always find plenty to do in the way of makin' and mendin' fences."

"Oh, that 's it, is it? I see there ain't much time for play, anyhow. I 'll tell you what, Dick, I don't like this going about barefoot. Caleb made me take off my shoes t' other day, and said I had no need of shoes and stockings in the summer. My feet are gettin' blistered like anything."

"Well, what do you want to wear shoes in summer for? Supposin' your feet does git a little cut and chopped at first, they 'll soon git hard enough and tough enough, too. Look a-here at mine." And then he turned up the sole of one of his feet, which, in its hardness, would have defied sticks, stones, or briars, if not even glass itself. "I 'll tell you what 'll bother you, though, the stubble in the hay-field; and still worse, the wheat and oat stubble! The only way to git over it is to putt your foot down on to it plump and square, and never to think nuthin' about it. That 's the only way."

With a loud yell at his cattle, and a free use of the whip, he then sent them bounding and ourselves bouncing down the uneven, narrow lane to the wood. Work like this, in which the oxen or horses played a part, was always pleasant, though on this particular occasion it was varied by discomfiture as well as amusement.

Leaving the oxen to themselves to pick the scanty herbage about the woods, whilst we were cutting up and trimming the fallen branches ready for loading, they wandered away from us.

"I 'll go and fetch 'em back," I said, eager to try my

hand at ox-driving. Then, running and placing myself in front of them, I shouted "whoa, whoa," with a vigor that woke the echoes of the woods. In vain I tried to stop or turn the gigantic beasts. They simply stared at me with their big wondering eyes, and, without showing the smallest fear or respect, kept on their course, tumbling me backwards over the stump of a tree in their advance!

Dick, who stood watching the proceeding with great glee, now came forward to take the animals in hand, and with a word from his well-known voice, and a gentle tap on the nose of the near-side one with his whip, led them quietly back to the wood-pile.

Though this little affair humbled me somewhat, and raised Dick in his own estimation, his triumph did not last long, for I soon became as expert in the management of oxen as he was.

My first essay at milking was not any more successful, and proved equally amusing to Dick, who stood watching me with much curiosity. Taking my place at the cow's side, I began to tug away for dear life, with all the awkwardness of an amateur dairyman, when lo! with a kick that knocked me and my pail endways, the impatient beast bolted forwards and pitched savagely into the first cow in the yard she was not afraid of. A general panic amongst the cows ensued, in which Rachel sat on her stool in their midst, cowless, and convulsed with laughter.

"I thought you'd ketch it," cried the boy, "when I see you go to the wrong side of her! Here she is; try her agin now on t'other side; she's quiet enough."

"Always go to the off-side of the cow when thee milks, Henry," Rachel said, when the fun of the thing permitted her to speak again.

This useful lesson about the right and wrong side of

the cow when milking was remembered, not only when milking ceased to be a joke, and got to be part of my every-day life there, but has also recurred to my mind many times since, when, looking at prints and pictures of farm-yard scenes, I have noticed the milker on the wrong side of the cow.

One evening, a little before bed-time, when I had been a fortnight with the Thomases, I was sitting in my chair, half asleep and very weary after my day's work. Rachel had just returned from the other house, where she left her husband with Joshua and a neighbor who had dropped in. A sudden thought seemed to strike her, and, addressing me, she said:

"Henry, does thee know thee 's never wrote to thee mother yet? Don't thee think thee ought?"

"Yes; I s'pose I ought. I promised to do so, but I have never written a letter in my life yet," I answered, dreamily.

"Well, then, s'pose thee takes this pen and ink, and here 's a sheet of paper somewheres in this drawer. Come now; I 'll do what I can to help thee." And then she pulled out from among a mass of small things a sheet of heavy foolscap paper, all ruled ready for writing. Difficult as it was, I roused myself for the effort, and began the letter from Rachel's dictation. "Now putt down the date first. Thee must always begin with the date at the top of the letter. Let me see — this is Fourth-day, June the sixth, ain't it? Yes; June the sixth."

So, beginning with the date at the very top line, as directed, I went forward with commendable briskness as far as:

"Dear Mother: I take up my pen to write and let you know how I like my place —" and then came to a dead

halt and a long pause for want of something to go on with.

"Well, what will thee say next? Can't thee think of something theeself to say?"

"I'll say I like my place very well;" and — pleased at the thought of getting through the troublesome task — I wrote it down accordingly, to the great relief of Rachel as well as myself.

After this came the real tug. What was to follow? We looked inquiringly at each other, then at the ceiling; I dipped my pen a score of times into the ink, and as often threw it back; snuffed the tallow candle savagely with my fingers, as though that was the real obstacle; but all to no purpose. The thing would not work at all, for it was clear that the combined talents of the two of us were not equal to a complete letter that night. At last Rachel came to the rescue:

"I'll tell thee what to say. Tell her thee'll be coming to town with Caleb in a few weeks, and then thee'll tell her all thee has to say."

Struck with the cleverness of the suggestion, and seeing in it an easy escape out of my dilemma, I gladly adopted it, and finished my letter, leaving all the four sides of the broad sheet of paper untouched, except the half dozen lines at the top of the first page.

Successfully folded, and the address boldly written on the ample space outside, it was next morning handed to one of our neighbors as he passed the house, on his way to the city market. He tucked the letter in his hat, and promised to deliver it next day to my mother, — a promise he faithfully kept.

The days of cheap postages had not then arrived, and, although a post-office was kept very near us, Caleb Thomas

was not the man to spend the value of a pound of butter, or a whole dozen of eggs, for the transmission of a letter. He never wrote letters himself, nor did he waste any time over books or newspapers, for he found he could get along without them, and so was not going to spend his money over things he did not feel the need of. Rachel, though more intelligent than her husband, showed the same indifference for books as he did. Still, at this very time she was tempted by a wily pedlar to subscribe for a new illustrated family Bible, that was to be completed in a given number of monthly parts, at so much each; but finding it had only got as far as the Book of Job, when she thought it ought to be at Revelation, she got out of patience, and cut it short there in disgust, when called on for another payment.

The Thomases, though standing tolerably well as respectable farmers, and as members of the Society of Friends, were not by any means a fair specimen of even the average intelligence of their neighborhood. For a purely agricultural community, and not a wealthy one at that, the good people about Friendship were fairly educated. Some few of the younger men, ambitious to shine in the world, had, by hook or by crook, obtained for themselves a more liberal education than their own schools could afford. But, as a rule, few went beyond the elementary branches of reading, writing, arithmetic, and geography, as taught in those schools, and which formed the standard of general education thereabouts. The severe and constant labor of farming, in which nearly all were engaged, left but little time for the pursuit of knowledge under the most favorable circumstances; but in the case of Caleb, and also his brother-in-law, Joshua Ball, it was absolutely neglected.

The only newspapers in circulation there were two weekly ones, published in Doylestown, the county town, and representing opposite views in politics. But neither of these popular organs ever found its way to our farm.

As Friendship was very often spoken of, I had a strong desire to go and see that pride of our township. It was only about two miles off, and as the Friends' meeting-house was situated there, I took the opportunity, when going to meeting, to take a look at the village at the same time.

Our people were not regular attendants at meeting, by any means. In fact, they very seldom went there; and had I not expressed a wish to Rachel to go myself, I doubt if ever I should have seen the inside of the house.

Religion, or anything appertaining thereto, was never discussed, or in any way referred to in our family, and I never knew what views my master and mistress had on the subject. If they had any at all, they kept them carefully wrapped up in their own bosoms. When, on rare occasions, they attended meeting, it was in the proper conventional style of the sect as regards dress, with the one exception of Caleb's hat, which was not of the strict Quaker regulation pattern. But their clothes were good and neat, and right nice they looked when, seated together in their top-gig, or "cheer," as it was familiarly called, they drove off on a First-day morning to their place of worship. A heavy steel watch-chain dangled conspicuously from the fob of Caleb's trousers at such times; and in this he took great delight. His self-satisfied air and slightly swaggering gait, as he took his place by the side of his shiny-faced wife, was a sight to behold. And it must be admitted that a smarter looking or better matched couple seldom entered the meeting-house.

When I asked Rachel for leave to go to meeting on the Sunday following, she informed me that they were going themselves on that day, but that if Caleb thought he could spare me, I might go also. So, with my master's consent, I took an early start, and reached the village about the same time they got there themselves.

CHAPTER IV.

OUR VILLAGE AND ITS MEETING-HOUSE.

FRIENDSHIP was essentially a "one-horse" village, although it was currently reported that Jim Swanson, the gay young fellow who drove one of the stages that daily passed through it, had declared that, of all the places he knew on his route, he liked that —— little Friendship the best. This opinion of Jim's was often quoted by its citizens with great pride.

The village consisted of one street, a quarter of a mile or so long, with neat, unpretentious houses on either side. It had neither mills, manufactories, nor commerce to give it life and prosperity, nor could it boast of a single newspaper or printing-office.

There were two inns, one of which — the "Three Tuns" — was supported mainly by the stage-coaches that stopped there every day to dine and change horses. How the other house managed to exist I do not know; for, as to drinking, had the whole village signed the pledge bodily, it could not well have been more temperate than it was.

The one store in the place was kept by old Thomas

Brown, who, it was said, by trading and money lending, had amassed a considerable fortune, and was, consequently, a good deal looked up to by his neighbors. A blacksmith shop, a wheelwright's, and a tannery represented the other industries of the place; but the main feature of Friendship — the one that endeared it more than any other to all the good people round about, except the few Dutch inhabitants — was its meeting-house. There was no other place of worship in or near the village, and very few of any sect but Friends were to be found there.

The meeting-house was a neat and plain wooden building, painted white, and stood in a pretty, retired spot at one end of the village. It had its little graveyard hard by, where for generations its members, when done with this life, had been buried.

The village school-house — built exactly on the same model as the meeting-house, and looking like a young branch of the same family — was in close proximity to the other.

Next in importance to these, and forming one side of the large quadrangle in which the buildings stood, was the long line of sheds for the accommodation of worshippers who rode or drove from a distance. Here was ample space for forty or fifty vehicles, side by side. On First-day mornings, long before service began, the men and boys, dressed up in their spruce holiday clothes, would assemble in front of these sheds, and, forming little knots as fresh arrivals swelled their numbers, whiled away the interval in pleasant chat and good-natured criticism on the newcomers.

One by one these would — in one- and two-horse vehicles of various shapes and styles — drive lazily through the gates towards the gigantic buttonwood tree that stood

in the middle of the enclosure, and, after depositing the women and children under its wide-spreading branches, take their places at the sheds. Then the women, following the example of the other sex, gathered around the porches of the building, and, profiting by the only opportunity they had of meeting together in an easy, sociable way, made the very best use of the limited time allowed them.

Each arrival at the gate was the signal for general attention and remark among the men and boys at the sheds, who, knowing every man, his family, and his affairs, were quick to detect anything new, strange, or peculiar about it.

"Why, who is that Nathan 's got on his back seat? I never see her before," asked Joel Penrose, as Nathan Edwards's neat, four-wheel carriage just then made its appearance. No one was able to answer Joel's question; but it was evident, from the commotion among the females and the numerous introductions of them to the stranger, that a person of unusual importance had come.

"Hallo!" cried another; "Dan'l 's got his bay colt out to-day. He seems to go steady enough, too, for a two-year old, don't he?"

"Yes; I guess Dan'l 's putty proud of that there colt, too; and I allers said he 'd turn out a good un,' from knowin' the stock he come from," put in Caleb Thomas.

Then, as Daniel Faulkner drew up to his place in the shed, a fat, chunky, little man, in a hat of very pronounced brim, said, with a chuckle:

"Well, Uncle Dan'l, I 'm glad to see thee get here with a whole skin, with that colt of thine. Thee has n't brought Aunt Mary along to-day. Afraid to trust her with the colt, eh?"

And then the little man quietly withdrew, his sides shaking with laughter, as though he had said a very clever thing. All the rest of the group joined in the laugh against Daniel, who, taking it all very good-naturedly, stepped forward, after making his horses fast, and shook hands all round. He then drew Caleb aside, and said to him:

"Caleb, I understand thee intends leaving Joshua's place and farming on thy own account. If so, why can't thee come and take my place?"

"Well, Dan'l, I dunno who could a' told thee that, bekus, altho' I did think of doin' so, I hain't said nuthin' about it to nobody."

"Well, I only heard it a day or two ago; but if thee should think seriously about it, I can only say if thee 'll come and see me, we 'll talk up the matter, and perhaps agree on something."

Caleb promised he would do so as soon as he came to a decision about leaving where he was.

The terms "aunt" and "uncle" among the Friends were commonly, and almost indiscriminately, applied to elderly people, without regard to any relationship existing between them, though the frequent intermarriages in the community might go very far to warrant the use of them in that way.

At ten o'clock, when the meeting opened, I took my seat, with covered head, among the silent throng, who filled the house to its utmost capacity. Often the service was gone through without a word or sign, or scarce a movement from any one, all present being intent on their own reflections during the hour or more it lasted. Though silent, there was a solemnity and impressiveness about the worship that spoke with a simple pathos that could not fail to touch any heart not too hard to feel.

Sometimes one of the leading members, male or female, would be moved to speak. Another time, two or more would address the meeting, always with a propriety, earnestness, and knowledge that not only riveted the attention of the hearers, but, as it seemed to my inexperienced mind, was far beyond the simple character and habits of the speakers themselves.

On this occasion of my first attendance, a very celebrated personage, and one of the shining lights of the Society, Lucretia Todd, preached.

Usually, her visit to any strange place was heralded some time in advance, so that all might go and hear her. But this time the only intimation we had of her visit to Friendship was when she alighted from Nathan Edwards's carriage, for it was none other than Lucretia Todd who was discovered on the back seat of that vehicle by Joel's sharp eye.

Her presence at a meeting was always regarded as an event of high importance, for she spoke with a fervid eloquence seldom heard there. She was listened to with rapt attention, and, I should judge, with great benefit to all concerned, whilst her visit was made the topic of conversation in the neighborhood for weeks after. Even the sluggish spirit of Caleb was moved by it, for whenever the matter was talked of in his presence, his face brightened up, and he became for the time filled with ardor. But, whatever else he might have to say about Lucretia Todd, he always summed up his opinion in his usual knowing way, when speaking decisively about anything, of half closing his eyes, smiling and shaking his head, with: "There 's one thing about that there woman — she allers gives a reason for everything she says."

This, he seemed to think, was the very essence of criti-

cism not only, but the highest compliment that could be paid to the preacher.

The service was brought to a close by one of the elders rising and shaking hands with his next neighbor, upon which signal a general confabulation among the members ensued, and the hum of many voices filled the room for some time after. Then, with many kindly farewells, all dispersed to their homes, until another First-day came round, and brought with it the much-prized opportunity of a common public worship and a pleasant social intercourse.

So far as I was concerned, at least, I don't know that the season made any particular difference in the amount of work I had to do, for I was kept hard at it from daylight until bed-time. Except in hay-time and harvest, and an occasional day's hiring during some particular pressure, the whole labor of the farm was done by ourselves. And hard, grinding, incessant toil it was. There was no let-up about it, nor scarcely time for breathing.

Hay-making was now in full blast, and all my childish notions — gleaned from picture-books — about the fun and frolic of this charming occupation were speedily and rudely scattered to the winds! I never found the least bit of fun in it. Beginning at four in the morning, and continuing all the day under a broiling sun, with the short intermissions necessary for meals only, and kept up too at the very highest possible pressure — it fairly takes away my breath, even now, to think about it! No talking, laughing, singing, or joking; but mowing, pitching, and raking — raking, pitching, and mowing all day, as hard as we could tear.

There were no mowing-machines then, and horse-rakes were not yet in general use. My feet had not yet acquired

that india-rubber toughness that Dick's had, and I consequently suffered so much from the prickly stubble as to find it a doubly difficult task to keep up with my fellows in pitching and raking. This brought a sharp remonstrance from my master.

"Henry, why don't he keep up with t' others in rakin'?" he demanded as we were about to leave the field for dinner, when the long tin horn of Rachel sounded its note of call to that welcome meal.

"I can't; I 'm not used to it; it 's the first time I ever raked hay in my life."

"What 's that got to do with it? Thee can put thee arms out like this, and then pull 'em back agin as well as any one else, can't thee?" he asked in a tone of great surprise; and then, suiting the action to the word, showed how easy it was to be done, if one would only think so. "Now go and feed his hogs, and then come in to dinner."

Dinner included hard cider from the barrel for the use of the hired hands, or coffee — made on Martha's principle — for such as might prefer it. The meal was usually the work of fifteen minutes or less, and was eaten in solemn silence — broken only by the clatter of knives and forks.

When over, the men made up their hour's intermission by a slumber in the shade of a tree, to gather strength for the afternoon's struggle, and at the same time to digest their heavy meal. But this indulgence would be too much for me — a mere boy — whose time could be so usefully filled up by a thousand odd-and-end jobs, or "chores," belonging to a farm.

On this particular occasion the want of molasses seemed the most urgent one, for when dinner was over Rachel said to her husband:

"Caleb, there ain't a drop of molasses in the house. Could thee spare Henry to go for some, does thee think?"

"Yes; I guess we kin spare him long enough for that," Caleb said, always ready to oblige his wife. "Henry, how long does he think it will take him to run up to the hill and fetch a can of molasses for Rachel?"

I said I would go as quick as I could, but did not know how long it would take me.

"Very well; now take this here can, and run up to David Anderson's store on the hill there, and git a gallon of molasses, and see how soon he can git back. Now I want to see him scratch gravel."

This hint about scratching gravel I understood to be a delicate way of intimating that I was to run all the way — a distance there and back of four miles. Being thus put on my mettle, and wishing to gain their commendation, I "put my best foot forward," and got back home again — hot and breathless — just as the people had resumed their work in the hay-field.

Both Caleb and Rachel praised me for my smartness, but the performance established for me an inconvenient precedent, for whenever, after that time, I started for any place, on or off the farm, I was expected to "scratch gravel."

Soon after the haying season was over Caleb began his preparations for another journey to market, and, as my six weeks' probation had expired, I had to decide between going back and remaining in town, and returning with him as an indentured apprentice to serve out the remainder of my two years' term. I had already decided in my own mind on the latter course, for, although completely undeceived in my ideas about the country, I was far enough from being weaned from it. The charm was not

yet broken. If the work was hard, the fare coarse, and the treatment a little rough, I felt a boy's pride in my growing strength and ability to endure all these. They were only what other country boys had to put up with, after all. Besides all this, I could not endure the thought of being shut up in a city counting-house, after the freedom — hard freedom as it was — of the open fields and woods.

Harsh and unsympathetic as my master generally was in manner, I did not believe him to be intentionally unkind; and if by any chance the place got to be unbearable, I had my remedy always open to me.

In Rachel I felt I had a good friend. She was once kind enough to say that the reason of her partiality for me was my superiority to the common run of rough country lads; and this little compliment went far to strengthen my attachment for her.

Added to all this was the fear of being laughed at by my city friends for knocking under after a few weeks' trial of farming life.

So I agreed to accompany Caleb to town, and be "bound apprentice" there.

I do not intend to record all the little details of that journey to market, so different from the other, six weeks before. Comparatively speaking, the latter was a pleasant holiday excursion. This a dull, prosy, business affair, without excitement or novelty of any kind. Then I was little more than a passenger, thinking only of pleasure, and looking only at the bright side of everything. Now I was the drudge — the first to jump when the horses wanted watering or feeding, or anything else had to be done.

The "Bird in Hand" and the "Red Lion" inns and

yards, with their bustle and babble, had no longer the charm for me they once had, but seemed very matter-of-fact affairs. Even that botanical wonder, the great Napoleon Bonaparte, stood between his two trees, as firm and upright as ever, without remark, if not without notice from either of us.

Having, after a good deal of persuasion, overcome my mother's objection to the arrangement, steps were taken immediately after market-hours to complete the contract. The three of us met at a magistrate's office, where the formality of binding was gone through, and the document which disposed of my liberty for two years was duly signed, witnessed, and sealed, and then handed to my master, who thrust it into his hat for safe-keeping. Thus having squared up matters in the city, we again set out for home, this time as master and apprentice.

Unrestrained by the presence of his wife and sister on this journey, I regret to have to say that on the way home Caleb, taking advantage of our stoppages for feeding and watering the horses, gave way on several occasions to the tempter drink, and did positively meet his wife at the gate in a state of disgraceful bemuddlement. A meeting that was looked forward to by her as one of pleasure, was thus, as soon as she caught sight of his fuddled face and unsteady movements, turned into a scene of bitter reproach and resentment.

Caleb was far too conscious of his guilt to think of quarrelling, or having any words with Rachel, soundly as she berated him; but slinking off to the barn with his horses, he there, by dint of sharp exercise and a good deal of fussing about, succeeded in partially shaking off the effects of his potations, and then returned to his wife, a steadier, if not a happier, man.

I must do him the justice to say that a love for strong drink was not one of his failings, and never more than two or three times did I see him the worse for taking it. This particular one may have been meant only as a rejoicing — a celebration over the ceremony of the day before; but if so, he had it all to himself, for I was not asked to join in it.

CHAPTER V.

THE WAY FARMING WAS TAUGHT IN BUCKS COUNTY.

AFTER my return from the city, matters did not go on any better with me, or my position improve in any way. The work was harder, if possible, and my master himself became more severe and exacting.

Finding me one morning feeding the hogs, he came up to me, and, after taking a look at the trough, he said:

"Well, has thee fed the hogs?"

"Yes, I've just fed them."

"Why, look a-here, thee hain't half cleaned out this here trough!" And, pointing to a few corn-cobs at one end, he continued his lecture: "Did n't I tell him allers to clean out the trough before puttin' in the slops? Look a-here at these here cobs! Now, I 'll see if I can't make thee mind what 's told thee."

Then, seizing me by the shirt-collar with one hand, and picking up a stick, which lay conveniently by, with the other, he hammered away at me for some time, with a vigor that took away all the breath we had in our respec-

tive bodies, and left me with scarce strength enough to crawl in to breakfast.

The miserable corn-cobs were, doubtless, only a pretext for picking a quarrel with me, just to show me early what I had to expect if I did n't mind my p's and q's.

It now became plain to me that "switching" was not confined to the offences of lying, swearing, and stealing, as I was led at first to suppose, but included, at least, one other fault.

It can easily be imagined that our morning meal, after this exercise at the hog-trough, was not a very merry one. Caleb did his best to smooth things down, and, whilst speaking kindly, tried to look like a man who had only done a painful duty. I sat speechless and sullen, filled with serious thoughts about running away at the very first opportunity. The lesson in farming I had just received might be a necessary and valuable one, but I did not feel able to appreciate it.

Suspecting, no doubt, that I was meditating that or some other sort of revenge, and in view of the inconvenience my loss would be to him just then, and perhaps also feeling some little compunction for having gone so far, he said, in a tone of much kindness:

"He need n't never be afeerd o' me, Henry, as long as he 's a good boy. If he behaves hisself and minds what 's told him, I 'll never switch him."

What Rachel thought, I never knew; for she maintained a strict silence all through the scene. If she felt any sympathy for me at all, she prudently checked it, thinking, it may be, that she might one day have to try her own hand on me.

At any rate, I left the table with a heart full of bitterness, if nothing worse, and in no way appeased by my

master's civil speech. However, before I could decide positively what course to take, I had almost got over the punishment, and went about my work as usual, though fully bent on leaving the place at all hazards, should there be a recurrence of it.

I told Dick about the flogging, soon after; but the only consolation I got from him was:

"Aha! I thought you was a makin' a big mistake in gittin' apprenticed to him. You would n't ketch me goin' to live with him, no how."

"What would you do if he flogged you?"

"Do? why I 'd cut away like lightnin'. He would n't lick me more than once, I tell you."

I could n't help admiring Dick's spirit when I heard this, and felt half ashamed of myself for having so quietly submitted to the ill-usage; but my admiration for him soon changed, for it came out, not long after, that he had had many a switching, not only from his master, but his mistress too — without ever attempting to *cut away* either.

If there is any work about a farm much harder or more disagreeable than hoeing Indian corn, I have yet to find it out. Its very monotony is wearisome. You begin at the top of one of the long parallel rows — hoe in hand and back bent to the work — removing the weeds and drawing the earth round the young plants, until the bottom is reached; then returning by another row, you keep on repeating the process again and again, until the whole broad field is finished. There is no rest or variation whatever, and, carried on under a torrid sun, it is slavery itself. In fact, "hoeing corn" is not infrequently used as a synonym for slavery.

Later in the season, when the stalks are well grown, the

finishing touch is given to them by a light, one-horse plough or a cultivator passing down the rows and throwing the earth well up about the roots.

This work of hoeing corn occupied the interval between hay-making and harvesting, and was pursued by us with the same earnestness and energy that they were.

In the picture-books I had seen of farming life there was nothing prettier or more attractive than the scenes of well-dressed, sleek-looking men and boys, leisurely and comfortably engaged in this interesting occupation of hoeing corn. But picture-books, as I have already shown, are not to be relied on in these matters.

The neighbors we had about us, including a fair sprinkling of Dutch, were numerous and sociable. As a matter of course, we all knew each other's business and family affairs quite well; and these formed the principal topics of conversation in our homes. It is true that seldom anything noteworthy took place in our neighborhood, births, marriages, and deaths being the chief exceptions, or, possibly a "vendue," or sale of a farmer's effects, which raised a temporary commotion, and gave to our local auctioneer, the fat and jolly Peter Hunkinson, an opportunity to show off his wit and crack his jokes, in a flood of broken English, that kept his hearers in a roar, and supplied the township with fun for a month after.

Among our neighbors was old Heinrich Klymer, who was noted for his fine farming and his immense barn, which was the wonder and admiration of everybody, and the pride of the old man's heart. There were not many equal to it in the whole State of Pennsylvania, which is saying a good deal. His farm was a model of order, neatness, and good cultivation. Old Heinrich was looked up to not only as the leading authority on matters agricul-

tural, but being a blustering, dogmatical old man, his opinion carried much weight upon most matters and things.

His son, a lad a little older than myself, named after him, was a chip of the old block, and as full of noise, and bluster, and energy as Heinrich himself. He was known for his reckless driving and general fast ways, which gained for him an unenviable reputation among the quiet, peaceful folks around. Even his oxen, when not loaded, were driven at a hard gallop, whilst his loud yells in urging them forward were terrible to hear.

Passing on his way to mill one day, as Caleb and I were busy with mending the fences on the roadside, the old man drew up his team for a little neighborly chat.

"Vell, Caleb, how goes it mit you, heh? Maken' blenty money now, heh?"

"Well, Heinrich, how does thee git on? I guess ther' ain't nobody maken' money enough to hurt 'em jist now, is ther'?"

"Is it drue you 're goin' to leef here and go up near de willage, vos? I heered so."

"I dunno myself yit. But everybody knows your business better than you know it yerself, somehow."

"All wot I can say is, if it 's drue like I heered, dat you 're goin' to hire Dan Faulkner's farm, yer kant do petter. You neffer do no good here, long as yer lif."

"I 'm afeered thee ain't fur out of the way, Heinrich. Ther' 's jist one too many on this here place as things is now. Somebody 's got to leave, and that durned soon."

"Vell, den, you petter take my adwice and dry and git dat place of Faulkner's. Ef you kin git it anyways cheap, yer better puy it, too. Good mornin'."

I believe Caleb was influenced very greatly by this ad-

vice of Klymer's in his decision about the Faulkner farm, for he had much confidence in his judgment.

Among his other peculiarities was that of excessive diffidence and confusion when in the presence of those he felt to be his superiors, or of strangers. In this little interview with neighbor Klymer, he wriggled himself about like an eel out of water all the time. He scratched his head, yawned, smirked, put his hands in his trousers' pockets, and shook himself uneasily from side to side. To see him under such circumstances, anybody would put him down as one of the most bashful and harmless of men.

Another neighbor, who was a frequent, though not always welcome, caller at our house, was Uncle Silas Jeffreys. The old man was slipping fast into dotage, if not already there, and was troubled, as well as troubling his friends, with one of the infirmities peculiar to that state of mind, namely, a very bad memory. He was very curious in the matter of people's ages, more especially of women's; and his curiosity, too, often took a very inconvenient turn. Tell Uncle Silas as often as you liked your age, and he would be sure to ask you the very next time he saw you what it was, and that, too, regardless who might be present. Thus he would drawl out:

"Rachel, how old is thee now? Why, I remember thee ever sence thee was cuttin' thee teeth."

Another time, on a Sunday evening, when Sister Martha and her betrothed, a man many years her junior, were there at tea, Uncle Silas, taking a long look at her across the table, and evidently bent on some deep mental calculation, said:

"Martha, if my memory ain't wrong, thee must be nigh onto forty-five year old now? Thee was born in

the very year that I bought that yoke of cattle from thy father."

"Why, Uncle Silas, I told thee t' other day how old I was, did n't I? Thee must be losin' thee reecollection," Martha answered, peevishly, whilst a frown passed over her swarthy little face.

But the old man was in no way disconcerted by these snubs, for he would return to the subject the very next time they met, thinking, seemingly, that a matter of so much personal interest as one's age must be a proper and welcome thing to talk about.

If Silas's visits were dreaded by the women folk, his daughter, Deborah, was always a welcome guest at everybody's house. To aid her old father in eking out a living on their tiny farm, she had taken up the business of millinery and dress-making. This necessitated a frequent visit to Philadelphia, where, among her city friends and business acquaintances, she had acquired manners and tastes of a higher order than most of her sex in the immediate neighborhood.

From the very beginning of our acquaintance this young lady took to patronizing me, and was always friendly and agreeable when we met. One Sunday afternoon, about this time (July), Deborah, Rachel, and I were sitting quietly chatting at the back door of the cottage, when Deborah said to me:

"And how does thee like living in the country, Henry?"

"Oh, I like it very well."

"Why, would n't thee rather live in the city?"

"No; I don't know that I would."

"Well, I should like always to be there. I love the city. Is thee fond of reading?"

"Yes; when I can find a book to suit me."

"Then, what does suit thee? I mean what sort of books! What has thee read? Now tell us that."

"A good many things — *Sandford and Merton, Carter's Travels, Gulliver's Travels, Robinson Crusoe*, histories, and I don't know what."

"Has thee never read any novels?"

"Yes; a few — *Vicar of Wakefield, Nick of the Woods, The Three Spaniards*, and a few others."

"Has thee never read *Charlotty Temple?*"

"*Charlotte Temple!* no; not read it; but I've heard of it."

"Oh, then, thee must read it. I'll lend it to thee. What is *The Three Spaniards* about? Very bloodthirsty, I suppose?"

I assured her the story was full of horrors, and then made a feeble attempt to recite some of its thrilling details, in which both women appeared deeply interested. Coming to an incident, however, which was above the average in bloodthirstiness, I broke down under the excitement, and — leaving the rest to their imagination — went away to do my evening's milking.

From hoeing corn to cutting and garnering wheat; from wheat to oats, oats to rye, and rye to buckwheat, it may be imagined there was not much time left that summer for reading novels, or for any other recreation, mental or bodily!

In all these labors I did my full share, and when the ordinary day's work was done I had to fill up the remaining hours, until bed-time, by feeding and otherwise attending to the animals, and doing such other odd jobs as fell in my way.

On one of these evenings Rachel and I sat quietly milking our half a score of cows, in the yard next our

own house. Caleb having finished his work for the day, sat on the top rail of the fence that formed the inclosure, serenely chewing his tobacco and looking on the peaceful scene with evident satisfaction and pride. Unfortunately for us, all this peace was not destined to last long. The flies that evening were more than usually troublesome — showing the poor beasts no quarter, and giving them no rest. This was especially the case with Rachel's cow, who could not be coaxed to stand still under the terrible infliction, and be milked in the bargain.

"Henry," she said, "I wish thee 'd leave thy cow, and come and brush the flies off Amy for me while I milk her. She won't stand at all."

Taking a goodly-sized branch of a tree in my hand, I at once went up to the restless animal and began to attack the pestiferous little insects with might and main, but all to no purpose, for not even this protection would quiet her. Making a sudden dart forward, she overturned both the milker and her half-filled pail in the twinkling of an eye. This was altogether more than Rachel's patience could bear. Somebody must be punished, and, as neither the cow nor the flies — the real culprits — were at hand, she at once marked me for her victim. So, rising from her undignified position on the ground with astonishing quickness, she made for me without warning and without mercy.

"Now, Henry, I am unbentedly determined!"

And then, without keeping me a second in suspense as to what she determined, she snatched the branch from my hand, and with the big end of it began to beat a lively tattoo over my head and shoulders. In vain I protested that it was not my fault — that I could not help it.

As I danced and ducked my head, and dodged, the

blows fell hot and swift, with a running accompaniment from Rachel of: "There now; take that, and that, and that — and this, and this, and this, *and this!* I'll see if thee'll serve me like that agin!" And a good deal more of the same sort, until, out of breath with exercise and rage, she picked up her pail and resumed her milking — this time with better success.

The castigation — thanks to the stick's lightness and my own alertness, and not to my mistress's tenderness — did me no harm whatever. I came out of the scrape sound in wind and limb.

Caleb, whose sense of fair play was probably roused on witnessing the unprovoked attack, gently remonstrated with the exasperated woman:

"Why, Rachel, it was n't his fault."

"It *was* his fault. He done it a-purpose — I know he did."

And then, without further noticing her husband, proceeded to back up her opinion in the way I have already described. Leaving me to finish the milking, Rachel soon afterwards took herself and her last pail of milk to the cellar, still stewing under her misfortune, not only for the loss of her milk and her balance, but also a favorite calico sun-bonnet, which, in the excitement, was dropped and trodden out of all shape by the feet of the irreverent cows. She had not been long in the cellar before her voice was heard calling sharply after me.

"What?" I answered, snappishly, and with the same sharpness as the voice from the cellar. Whereupon Caleb, who up to that time remained quietly perched on his rail, took up the quarrel for his wife, and, in a tone of deep injury, and biting fiercely at his tobacco, cried out:

"What does he mean by sayin' 'what' when Rachel speaks to him? Hain't I told him before allers to say 'hey' when anybody speaks to him? Now, mind, if ever I ketch him a-sayin' 'what' agin', I'll give him a good switchin'."

And with that wholesome caution he descended from his seat and made towards me, as though more than half inclined to point his moral by a practical illustration even then and there. But I had got too far away towards the cellar for another scene that day.

Indoors this little affair was soon forgotten; and I feel quite sure that, so far as Rachel herself was concerned, she was heartily ashamed, and sorry, too, that it ever happened, especially as it caused the destruction of her sunbonnet.

A few days after this occurrence, I was at work in the harvest-field with the other boy, when I said to him:

"I say, Dick, did you hear of the scrape I got into the other day?"

"Scrape? No; what do you mean? what was it?"

"Oh, nothing much; only a little whackin' from Rachel, because she said I drove the cow over her."

"Did you drive her over her?"

"No; of course I did n't."

"Are you goin' to stand it, then, or what are you goin' to do?"

"Stand it? yes. She did n't hurt me, so I don't care much about it."

"Did she make you yelp?"

"No; I should like to see the woman that could make me cry," I answered, thinking I might indulge in a little bounce after what I had gone through, but never dreaming what I said would ever come to Rachel's ears, after

which I gave the full particulars of the scene to Dick, who chuckled a good deal over it.

"Did you hear the row between Cale and Josh the other day?" Dick asked.

"No; what about?"

"It was in the barn, and they was mighty nigh havin' a fight. I made sure they would, too. They 've often had rows, and I expect as much as anything it will end in a regular knock-down before long. They 're allers in a dispute about sumthin'. Josh told Cale he lied; and Cale dared him to come outside, and said if he did he 'd thrash him."

"Well, did Josh go?"

"No; he knowed better. He 'd be no match for Cale, anyhow."

"I suppose Cale will be after a farm of his own soon, won't he?"

"Yes; he 's got his eye on one now, I hear, up near Friendship. He 's only waitin' for things to be settled here, and that won't be long now, I guess."

At ten o'clock, all hands in the field dropped their work and sat down under a tree to a hearty lunch of cold apple-pie, bread, cheese, and cider. Whilst this was going on, Joshua conceived the happy notion that a little entertainment would be a good thing just then, as he bawled out in his usual gruff voice:

"Now, come, why can't you two boys try your hand at a wrassel? Let 's see who 's the strongest. Now, Henry; now, Dick; come take a-holt, both of you, and let 's have a good square rough-and-tumble. Come, go at it now! — the best man wins."

Joshua's suggestion was received with acclamation and delight by all the other men, whose mouths were not too full of pie and cheese to second it.

And so to satisfy the company, all of whom appeared to be suddenly stricken with a desire to have the question of strength then and there settled, and besides being nothing loth ourselves, Dick and I jumped up, and seizing each other round the waist, went at it like two young bears. We tugged and we pulled, we squeezed and hugged each other, we pushed and twisted each other, got our legs twirled and tangled round and round, we puffed and grunted, until, hot and perspiring, both came to the ground with a bump, and in a manner that left the question of victory and strength still undecided.

"There, I guess that 's enough, ain't it?" said Caleb, who was thinking more of the work than the sport.

Again the men took up their "cradles," and went slashing away through the ripe grain, headed by Caleb, who was only too ready to show by his own example how much work a man could do in a day, without absolutely killing himself.

CHAPTER VI.

RELATES TO VARIOUS MATTERS—SOCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL.

IT was during harvest that my mother paid us a few days' visit. She came by the stage-coach from the city, which passed our door daily on the way to Friendship and places beyond. To her it proved anything but a visit of pleasure, and she never desired to repeat it. Our people were too busy to show her any attention, and my own time was much too valuable to be spent on her; so she was left to find what amusement she could about

the dull place. Caleb was coldly civil; whilst Rachel tried her best to be friendly, but showed too plainly how hard it went against the grain. But it was left for Martha to give the cold shoulder and freeze her out of the place. Scarcely deigning to notice my mother, this sharp little woman would nevertheless speak *at her* over her sister's shoulder, somewhat in this fashion:

"Lor', Rachel, thee must be very tired, with so much to do, and so many folks about thee at this time o' year" — or:

"I seen Aunt Mary at meetin' last First-day. She was talkin' about spendin' a few days with us, but I told her she 'd better putt it off, for we was too busy now to think of any one but ourselves."

Speaking to me in the evening, as we strolled along the road together, my mother, with a good deal of emotion, referred to this strange behavior, which, she said, she could not understand, after Caleb's invitation to her when in the city. "Be sure and come," he said, "sometime in the summer, before the cold weather sets in."

"I cannot think," my mother said, "how you can content yourself in such a place, and with such people! And how you can eat such food is a puzzle to me. That alone would drive me away, for I cannot stand it any longer."

I assured her I was not at all dissatisfied with the place or the people, who were on the whole good enough to me. And as to the food, I said I had got used to it, and nothing now came amiss to me in the way of eating.

"Still, I am sorry you ever came to such a place. But now you are here, I fear there is no help for it but to stay your time out. Caleb and Rachel both seem to think a deal of you. He said last evening, when you were away

at the barn, that he knew you were honest, as he had left three cents on the window-sill a whole week, just to try you, but that you never touched it."

"Left them there to try me, did he? Well, I never thought of that, although I saw the money there."

As to the switchings — not caring to hurt my mother's feelings — I said nothing about them. Two days afterwards she left for home by the same conveyance, having been with us five days altogether.

Although my mother was sorely disappointed by what she saw of the place and the people, and hurt as she undoubtedly felt by their uncourteous treatment, the visit proved for a long time after a source of much amusement both to herself and her friends. The queer sayings and doings and peculiar manners of the people on our place were the subject of many a pleasant jest.

Soon after harvest an event of considerable importance to the family took place, and one which caused no small amount of jubilation there. The executors to the estate had fixed a day for going over the farm and taking an inventory of it and the stock for valuation, previous to a final settlement and division among the happy heirs. Preparations were accordingly made for the reception and entertainment of the four gentlemen who had undertaken this arduous duty commensurate with its importance, though to many people they might appear far greater than the occasion called for.

Rachel and her sister were in a great state of bustle and agitation some days beforehand, and kept themselves fairly out of breath with roasting, baking, boiling, stewing, and preserving. One might have thought a grand county ball — or at least a big party — was on the tapis, instead of a dinner for a few plain old farmers, whose

ordinary daily fare was as plain as themselves, such was the quantity of food prepared for them.

The bill of fare embraced a shoulder of veal, ordered from the village butcher, and a rare sight at our place at any time; a chicken, a duck, and a turkey — intended for the city market — gave up their lives prematurely for the feast; pies in great variety, such as green-apple, dried-apple, plum, pumpkin, dried-peach, apple-butter — all got up without regard to cost, and with shorter and better crusts than I ever saw there before or since. Then there were preserved cherries, peaches, and quinces; cakes with plums and cakes without plums; pickled cabbage, pickled cucumbers, and pickled nasturtiums without stint. Coffee, tea, and jugs of cider formed the beverages. Caleb was in favor of adding whiskey to the drinkables, but was opposed by the two women, who carried the day.

The bounteous feast was spread in Joshua's best room; and in order to conceal from the eyes of the guests the good things in store for them, until the proper time should come for surprising them, the door leading to it was kept closed, and the window-shutters carefully bowed.

Except for Dick and me, the day was made a sort of holiday, and all were dressed as on a First-day. When the executors made their appearance, at nine o'clock prompt, both Rachel and Martha, radiant with smiles, were ready to greet them.

Many were the inquiries made by the two sisters, in the blandest and softest of tones, for the healths of Aunt Phœbe, Aunt Mary, and all the other female members of the executors' families. Civilities were bandied about, and all sorts of pleasant things said on both sides. Eli Ball, who had a reputation for humor, cracked sundry

clever jokes, at which the whole company, especially Caleb, laughed heartily. Indeed, to laugh and wriggle himself about was the most he did at that time, for he seemed more than usually discomposed and uneasy.

Joshua discharged his duties as host with a gruff, but frank, civility, that contrasted favorably with the other's awkwardness and affectation.

Never before had I seen the two sisters so amiable and gracious. The many agreeable and complimentary things they had to say about the guests would have done their hearts good, could they have heard them.

But business was business, and these executors were not the sort of people to lose much time over empty ceremony. So the half-dozen men soon betook themselves to the fields, books in hand, and went seriously to work at their duties of valuing the property.

Dick and I, who had been detained, in case we might be wanted, then left, each with a slice of pumpkin-pie in his hand, for our own work.

At noon, a long and loud blast from Martha's dinner-horn brought the whole party back to the house. Light was let into the banqueting-hall, the feast was revealed in all its ample variety, and, nothing loth, guests and entertainers took their places at the table, and their shares of the good things spread before them.

On so important an occasion as this, the presence of us two boys at the dinner-table would be too much to expect; so we took our humble meal alone in the common sitting-room, disturbed only by the tin-trumpety voice of Martha, calling now and then to Dick for something wanted in the other room.

Dinner was soon over, and the men again sallied forth to complete their day's work. The remains of the feast

were divided between the two houses, and for a couple of days luxury reigned supreme there.

About a week after the visit of the four executors, Caleb being away with his team somewhere, Rachel and I sat alone at dinner, which included some of the choice, but now stale, pies mentioned above, when Martha made her appearance. Throwing her sun-bonnet on a chair, she took a seat at our table, when immediately a lively chat between the two sisters followed.

The burthen of their conversation was about the late valuation, in which many mysterious hints were thrown out as to the probable sum each would be entitled to for her share of the estate. Both appeared to be in the highest degree satisfied, and elated with the bright prospect before them. Had the estate been worth a million, instead of a few thousand dollars, they could not have been more lifted up than they were.

"Why, Rachel, we 'll come off with flyin' colors; thee 'll see if we don't," said Martha, as a smile lighted up her countenance, but which suddenly changed to a frown, as she saw me cut a slice of pie off and put it on my plate.

"Josh thinks," she continued, "he 'll be able to pay thee thy full share agin' the time thee leaves here, or mebbee sooner, if thee wants it."

Again a smile of congratulation was about to steal over her face, when it was rudely checked by another slice of apple-pie, which at that moment I was going to transfer to my plate. This was too much for her patience, so, turning sharply to me, she said:

"Why, Henry, what a appetite thee 's got. Thee 'll eat all thee wits away."

More likely to work them all away, I thought; but I said nothing, and went on eating my pie.

I hope I do the two sisters no injustice, but I have often since suspected that they intentionally took advantage of Caleb's absence to give me a lesson, which neither he nor his wife had the courage to do, however desirable it might appear to them. Hearty as I was, my appetite was really no greater than either of the other men's or the boy's; and as to pies, they were generally the plainest and cheapest food put on the table.

The ordinary, everyday life on our farm was dull enough, and afforded but few materials for filling up my story, or that would in any way interest the reader. The sayings and doings of the people, except when they in some way bore upon my own life and actions, were seldom worth recording.

The object of this story being to show the difference between a country life as it existed in a boy's romantic imagination, and the stern reality as he found it, I shall be satisfied if I can succeed in doing this, by describing only such scenes, experiences, and impressions as I think will fairly illustrate it.

The seasons rolled on, and each month brought its own peculiar work in the field and the barn. Haymaking was followed by harvest, and after harvest came a variety of employments, already foreshadowed by my companion, Dick, as set forth in a previous chapter. But if the work was hard and unceasing, my strength by this time seemed to be in proportion to the demands on it. To follow by the side of the plough all day, to keep it clear of cornstalks and other impedimenta; to stand with bended back, hour after hour, pulling up by the roots the tenacious flax-stems; to pass the day in spreading manure over the field, or following my oxen and a heavy harrow over the rough, newly-ploughed furrows, was work which at one time I

should have thought impossible for me to do, and which I never dreamed of being called on to perform. Now it all came to me as a matter of course, and, though hard, it brought with it its compensations in the shape of health, strength, sound sleep, and a good appetite. And, besides all this, was the companionship of horses and other animals, always so dear to a boy, which had to be placed to the credit side of the account.

The return of Sunday was always looked forward to, not only as a partial relief from labor (for even on that day the animals must be attended to), but also for the opportunity it gave of attending meeting occasionally, or of visiting the neighboring farms; or, when the day was particularly hot, there was always pleasure and relief to be found in lying stretched full length in the hay-loft of the great barn, watching the swallows as they twittered about their nests in the roof high overhead. At other times, we two boys bathed in the clear, cool stream that ran through the woods.

Later in the year these woods were strewn with nuts from the tall hickory-trees, which it was our delight to gather and put by to dry for use in the winter. But Sunday afternoons was the only time we ever had for this or any other recreation.

For a time things ran along rather smoothly, and I had nothing particular to complain of, until an accident happened that brought about another domestic rupture, in which I was again the victim.

Rachel had been busy with her autumn preserving. Sundry jars of plums and quinces stood on the kitchen table, ready for the final touch, before they were put away for future use.

Having occasion to go near the table for something, as

bad luck would have it, I brushed against one of the jars, and threw it and its contents on the floor. Worse luck still, it turned out to be one of the quince jars, Rachel's favorite and scarcest preserve. Just as I was making a clumsy, but well-meant, attempt to scoop up the scattered delicacies, Rachel came in from the garden, and, stricken with horror and rage at what she saw, broke forth with:

"Now, Henry, what *has* thee been about? What *has* thee been doin' with my preserves? my squinches, too. Now, Henry, I am unbentedly determined thee sha'n't serve me like this for nuthin'."

Then, without waiting, or giving me the smallest chance to explain the matter, she seized a cart-whip from a corner of the room, and forthwith set about repeating the performance in the cow-yard a few months before.

"I 'll see if thee 'll leave my squinches alone or not!" she exclaimed, as she began to ply the whip, with might and main, about my devoted shoulders, whilst I, keeping time with its music, hopped and danced about the room, in front of her.

Escape was not possible, for my master had just arrived on the scene, and stood in the doorway, looking on as calmly as though we were dancing a minuet for his special diversion:

"Thee says no woman can make thee cry! I 'll see if I can't make thee cry!"

And then down came the whip again, with redoubled force, as I dodged and capered around her. But, after all, it was only a ridiculous waste of time and temper, for the whipping did me little or no harm, severe as it was intended to be. The room was far too small for a successful operation of this kind, the walls and ceilings being too near to allow of a free exercise of the long whip-lash.

Besides which, I adopted a different system of tactics from the former skirmish, for, instead of falling back under her fire, I kept at close quarters, and by this means broke the force of the blows.

As I took my punishment in perfect silence, without so much as a whimper or a tear, Rachel was greatly disappointed and annoyed, for had I cried it would not only have been a real comfort to her, but some compensation likewise for her loss. Nor do I believe that Caleb himself was altogether satisfied with the result, for, although he knew but little about the merits of the case, he seemed a good deal hurt at witnessing so big a storm with so little damage.

Seeing there was no sign of a resumption of hostilities, a dissatisfied frown came over his face as he ordered me to go and feed the hogs.

It was then dinner-time, and that ordinarily cheerless meal passed off in gloom and silence.

From making preserves to "husking corn," though an important, is not a very long step in point of time. After being cut in the autumn, the long stalks of the Indian corn are stood up in shooks about the field in much the same manner as wheat sheaves, their ponderous ears still clinging to them. The next step in the work is to détach these ears from their stalks. This operation is made the occasion of a little mild revelry, called, in the parlance of the country, a "husking frolic," or sometimes a "husking bee."

A fine night — moonlight where possible — is then selected, and as many neighbors, male and female, paid and unpaid, as can be got together to join in the work, gather in the field and distribute themselves in parties of twos and threes among the long rows of shooks. Now

the beautiful golden ears are separated from the husks which closely envelope them, and cast on the ground in heaps, ready for the wagon or cart the next day.

A sharp wooden peg, fastened by a leather strap to the palm of the hand, is generally used for piercing and dividing the husks.

By skilful persons the work is done with most astonishing rapidity. Oftentimes — as it was with us — a goodly sized field will be gone through by midnight.

Under a clear moonlit sky, and the delicious breezes of the "Indian summer" playing about, with laughter and merriment, free and unrestrained, going on all round, it forms one of the few bright spots in my farming recollections. The scene itself might not inaptly be compared to a gipsy encampment on a very large scale, and was extremely picturesque.

Of cider there was plenty in the field for all who wanted it, but the feast was kept for a later hour, when the work of husking was over. Then all the company assembled round the table in the kitchen, spread with a profusion of good things too numerous to mention. It is needless to add that after such a task all came to the feast with good appetites, and did ample justice to it.

Had the good people present all been Friends, no doubt the ceremonies would have ended with that meal, and all would then have quietly retired to their homes and beds. But it so happened that our Dutch neighbors formed a small but influential proportion of the company, and these, not being troubled with or respecting the scruples of the others against music and dancing, became clamorous for a dance. In vain it was pointed out to them that, besides the hour being very late, there was no music to dance by — not so much as a fiddle among them!

"Vell, den, if dere ain't no fiddle ve must vistle, dat's all," one of them said, determined not to be baulked by any such trifle as that.

A compromise was proposed by Martha, by substituting blind-man's buff and other games, in which all could join who wanted to. This was accepted by the wily Dutchmen, who knew full well that the ball once set rolling, would be sure to end in a dance, as they wished.

So the best room was promptly cleared of tables, chairs, and other incumbrances, and the sports began in right good earnest. The mirth and excitement increased as the games went on, until, no longer able to restrain themselves, two of the young Dutchmen stood up in the room and began pounding away at the carpet in a thoroughgoing double-shuffle, that threatened instant destruction to it.

"Oh! ef you're a-goin' to begin that, we'd better hev the carpet up!" cried Martha in alarm, as she saw the critical situation of her Kidderminster.

In a twinkling, the carpet was jerked up and pitched out of the room. A chair was placed in one corner, on which little Bill Simpson was mounted as chief-whistler, he not being a dancer. Then six or seven of the Dutch men and women went at it with a will, and danced themselves frantic to the exhilarating music of the whistlers, led by little Simpson. The excitement soon became contagious, and took hold of a number of the young Quakers, including Deborah Jeffries, and finally Martha herself! The other persons stood about in corners, or in the doorway, or loitered about the kitchen, according to the amount of interest they took in the proceedings.

The dancing itself was a great curiosity in its way. It

was without figures or forms, but instead thereof the partners placed themselves face to face, and then, backing and advancing again and again, scraped away on their toes with an energy and resolution beyond description, if not beyond praise.

As to Martha, she thoroughly enjoyed the exercise, and kept it up, when once she started, with her whole heart and soul. It was curious to watch her perspiring little person, with her arms looking as if pinioned to her side, and her fists tightly clenched, bobbing up and down before her lively Dutch partner, who shuffled and pounded away with an energy little short of desperation.

Thus the festivities were kept up until the small hours of the morning, and the impatience of the graver members warned them to disperse. It is due to those members — who formed the bulk of the company — to say that they did not favor these dancing frivolities, and that they took no part in them at all.

Husking frolics were common enough at this season, for every farmer had his field of Indian corn, although they did not all resort to this mode of gathering it. But whenever called on neighbor was ready to assist neighbor, and thus not only rendered an important service to each other, but lightened the labor of the field by harmless pleasure and recreation.

The lovely autumn weather, with its cool, bracing winds and its glorious, mellow sunshine, seemed to bring new life and spirit to one, and to rob labor of half its hardship. The work was still kept up in field, wood, and barn with as much diligence as ever, but it was not that breathless, break-neck sort that we had had all the summer through. So pleasant, indeed, did the change seem

to me about this time, that a part of my old enthusiasm about the country revived again, and I thought that if only the people were less harsh and exacting, farming life would not be so bad after all.

CHAPTER VII.

OUR VILLAGE SCHOOL.

AUTUMN, with all its charms, soon passed away and merged into winter, and with this season came many new and interesting experiences for me.

The severity of a North American winter, with its four or five months of almost unbroken frost and snow, is too well known to need any description from me. My first winter in Bucks County was a particularly severe one. As early as November the snow covered the ground in a solid layer, from which time, with rare exceptions, wheeled vehicles were put aside as useless, and sleighs and sleds brought out in their places.

Our time was now divided between threshing (with flails), winnowing and cleaning the various grains, drawing ice from the brook for summer use, and cutting and hauling fire-wood for the two houses.

Occasionally, also, a day was given to splitting rails for fences, for use in the early spring, before ploughing began. I found by this time that my companion's picture of farming operations, and their endless succession, was in no way overdrawn. There was no time for play or idleness — that was quite certain.

In consequence of Rachel's delicate state at that time,

and the inconvenience to her of walking all the way to the barn through the snow, the whole of the milking devolved on me. Rising promptly at five every morning, my first duty was to light the kitchen fire in the stove and put the kettle in to boil; after which I was at liberty to snatch a few extra winks, if I could, alongside the stove, until the first peep of day called me to my regular outdoor labors.

First there was the day's fire-wood to be cut and carried in. Oftentimes the wood-pile, which lay in front of the house, without any protection from the weather, was buried under a fresh fall of snow in the night, so that I had first to find my wood before I could chop it. Work like this, in the perishing cold of a winter's early morning, when, so far as I know, no other living creature was about, when the very axe-handle was near freezing to my fingers, and myself only half clad at that, ought to have been enough to cure me of any delusion about the country. In vain I blew on my fingers, and slapped them against my sides to keep them warm. The cold was too intense for such a remedy, even had I had the benefit of proper winter clothing. All my own clothes brought from the city were long since worn out, and my wardrobe was now reduced to the single suit I wore, namely: a linsey-woolsey jacket, trousers, and waistcoat, made by Rachel out of Caleb's superannuated garments, shoes, stockings, and cap. I had neither underclothes nor top-coat; neither gloves, mitts, nor neckerchief.

The other boy was a little better clad, but not much. But neither Dick nor any other boy in our neighborhood was forced out of bed at these untimely hours, and driven out of doors before daylight to perform such labor, whilst yet the rest of the family were snug in their warm beds.

A word or a hint to my friends in the city would have brought me the necessary clothing; but I did not care to complain, so long as I could bear it without.

Later on, in January, when my time for going to school arrived, an addition was made to my stock of clothes, in the shape of a pair of cotton corduroy trousers. The presentation of these was attended with no small amount of parade and palaver, as something that both giver and receiver might well be proud of, and speeches were delivered by both Caleb and Rachel, as though the gift had been a fine service of plate.

"Why, Henry, he won't know it 's winter at all when he gits them there pants onto him," Caleb said, with a sort of fatherly admiration, as the garment, with its complement of staring brass buttons, of various sizes and patterns, dangled from Rachel's outstretched arm.

To this Rachel herself added: "There, now, my boy, I told thee if thee was a good boy thee should n't want for clothes. I want thee to be as well dressed and look as nice as t' other boys when thee goes to school." Then she handed me the precious habiliment, and said, jauntily, as she did so: "Now, there, take and go up-stairs with thee, and putt 'em on."

Unaccustomed as I was to complimentary speech-making, I forbore to express my gratitude for the gift, but accepted it on the faith of what I was told, that I should now be able to defy the elements, and make myself comfortable. But a better acquaintance with corduroy showed the fallacy of this view.

A few days after this affair of the new pants, Rachel gave birth to a boy; and his name was Joshua.

The birth of Joshua did not by any means improve matters in the house so far as I was concerned, although

it was a subject of pride and rejoicing to the child's relatives. It brought Martha to the house a great deal during her sister's confinement; and though the presence of that wiry little woman was convenient enough in some respects, it was to me a positive evil.

I was so far fortunate as to be under her withering influence but a few hours of the day; but when I was within doors I felt that her prying eyes were always on me, and her tongue seemed forever on the wag.

"Now, Henry, if thee 's done breakfast," she would say, before I was more than half through that meal, "had n't thee better go and git on with thee churnin'?" Or, "Lor', Henry, I do wish thee 'd make haste and git done thee supper; I want thee to run up and tell Joshu-a I can't come home to-night."

In this way I was kept on the hop and jump, and allowed but little time for food or rest. It happened, curiously enough, that my services were most needed during meal hours, by which that never very lengthy ceremony was abridged to the choking point.

In Martha's eyes this was a great gain, for it not only saved my "wits" from running to waste through overstuffing, but economized the food, too.

In accordance with my apprenticeship indentures, I was entitled to six weeks' schooling this winter, and, much as it went against Caleb's grain to concede the right, and his wife's and sister's to submit to it, there was really no help for it. At no other season could I possibly be spared, and even the present being inconvenient enough, the only way was to make the evil as light as possible. Accordingly, every minute I was at home, and not in bed or at my meals, from five A. M. to bedtime, was put to some profitable use by one or the other of them. All the work

that could be crowded into my spare hours was given to me to do; and as the simple course of instruction at our school did not call for any studies or sacrifices of time after school hours, there was, happily for Caleb, no cause for complaint on that score.

Many times did Rachel, when in her affable moods, expatiate on the advantages of a good education, without which, she said, "no man, now-a-days, was n't thought nothing of."

And, whilst praising the little attainments I already possessed in that way, she dwelt, with no small amount of pride, on those in store for me when — through their bounteousness — I should be able to avail myself of them. All this, and many flattering references to the schools at Friendship, increased my desire to begin my half-quarter without delay.

As to my master, I believe he thought any further schooling on my part was altogether superfluous, for my acquirements were already so far beyond his own as oftentimes to make him smart under the contrast. This was more especially the case in regard to speaking, and the constant use by him of such phrases as "this here," "them there," "putt," "cotch," "hisen," "hern," and the like — which I avoided. The difference did not pass unnoticed, and Rachel more than once spoke about it.

The question as to what school I should be sent to, whether to the large one attached to the meeting-house at Friendship, or the private one in the same village, kept by Miss Mary Morse — or Aunt Mary, as she was familiarly called — was duly discussed and settled in favor of the latter. Whether the difference of half a dollar in the terms had anything to do with the decision I cannot say,

but in any case Aunt Mary had notice of my coming on the following Second-day.

My master did not forget to caution me, when I left for school on the Monday morning, not to let the grass grow under my feet in going to and fro, for, he said, "if he ketched me a-potterin' along the road, or foolin' about the ice with other boys, he would be sure to switch me."

I have been to a number of schools in my life, but none have left such pleasant memories in my mind as that simple little country school near Friendship, kept by that good Christian Quaker lady, Mistress Mary Morse.

I shall never forget her handsome, gentle face as I first saw it when, seated on her little platform in one corner of the school-room, she was presiding over her mixed brood of Dutch and Quaker boys and girls. Of the boys there were about thirty, and of the girls some eight or ten only, the majority in both cases being Quakers, but all of them natives of the county.

I believe I was the only one among them not born in the county, and, being known to very few of them, there was a natural curiosity on my first appearance there to see what the "town boy" was made of, and what sort of a scholar he was. So, when the first reading-class of boys and girls was ordered up, I was duly planted, amid the solemn silence of the school, right in the middle of them, with four on each side of me. The mistress had already questioned me as to my former studies, and found that I belonged to that class of readers.

It would be difficult for me to describe my feelings when I heard that pretty girl, Carrie Smiley, at the top of the class, lead off, in a sweet but dreadfully sing-song voice, with the verse from *Murray's Reader:*

"I am monarch of all I survey;
My right there is none to dispute;"

knowing full well that my time must soon come for going through the terrible ordeal of a first reading.

It mattered not that I saw from the start that I could read as well, if not better, than any of them. I felt that all eyes were fixed on me — up and down the class and about the school. Even that little dumpling of a Dutch boy, Aaron Woonsettler, who as a rule took no interest whatever in education — his own or anybody else's — turned on his little form to stare at me.

But, though as much frightened at the sound of my own voice as by the death-like silence of the room, I pulled through with my verse, after a bit of a flutter over the first line, with flying colors.

"Ye winds that have made me your sport,
Convey to this desolate shore
Some cordial, endearing report
Of a land I shall visit no more.
My friends, do they now and then send
A wish or a thought after me?
O tell me I yet have a friend,
Though a friend I am never to see."

Thus the ice was broken; the school breathed freely again; I was no longer a stranger there, and soon took my proper place and position among my fellow-seekers after knowledge.

Though our number comprised boys of various ages, from six to eighteen, and some of them roughish specimens of humanity at that, they were on the whole very tractable and well behaved. The tact and gentleness of the mistress, supported by the good influence of the female

element, kept the rougher characters under wholesome restraint.

It was impossible not to respect the mistress; and even her punishments, when she inflicted any — which consisted of a slap on the hand with a flat ruler — were accompanied by such a sympathetic smile, that the sufferer felt compensated for his pain.

Aunt Mary was a lady of good education and great natural dignity of character, and was one of the best known speakers at the meetings on First-days. Her voice was soft, and her manner most pleasant and winning. As a matter of course, she dressed with the strictest Quaker simplicity and neatness; and I believe the good woman was not a little annoyed by the love of finery and personal adornment which some of her female pupils exhibited. It was hard enough to have the two Dutch girls, Katherine Utt and Anna Hunkinson, with their gew-gaws always before her eyes; but to see Carrie Smiley, the daughter of Dr. Smiley, one of the strictest members of the Society in the village, wearing a gold ring, was just one step too far on the road of worldly vanity. Worse still, two of the other girls, tickled with the fancy of wearing those ornaments, but unable to get them of gold like Carrie's, appeared at school wearing imitation gold ones. This was almost too much for Aunt Mary's patience, and she lost no opportunity of reading the flighty things a homily on the emptiness of worldly vanities, and particularly that of personal decorations.

She doubtless saw in these small straws signs of that "new departure" from the rigid laws of the Society, in matters of dress and outward forms, which at that time began to show itself, and which all the older members deplored and battled against.

If Aunt Mary might rightly be called the monarch of the little school, Caroline Smiley was, by general tacit acknowledgment, the princess. It was wonderful what a magnetic power there was about that girl. There was not a boy in the school, even down to that mischievous youngster, little Aaron, that did not worship Carrie Smiley; and though thoroughly simple and unaffected herself, she could not help knowing it. She was just fourteen at the time, had deep-set, mysterious blue eyes, so full of hidden meaning that one could not help wondering what was going on there. Her hair, of light brown, was combed behind her ears, and kept in its place by a neat tortoise-shell comb, that almost encircled her pretty head. Carrie was a favorite with all the other girls, too, for, although she never giggled and twittered as they did, she was always kind and friendly towards them.

Among the most ardent of her admirers was Antony Kleine, a gaunt young Dutchman of eighteen, or thereabouts, whose seat was next to mine. Kleine had been sent by his parents, who lived in a part of the county where Dutch was the language most in use, to Friendship, for the improvement of his education and his very broken English at the same time. Most of the larger boys had some particular forte, either in the way of reading, writing, or arithmetic. Kleine's forte seemed to be drawing, or, at any rate, he thought it was, for he practised it with a zeal worthy of all praise, had he been set to do it, and not neglected everything else for it. But I fear love for the art was not the only motive for his industry in making pictures, but that his infatuation about Carrie had quite as much to do with it. Hour after hour, when he was supposed to be grinding away at his sums, his long, lanky body would be bent over his desk in an

almost horizontal position, his long legs stuck out behind, and resting on the toes of two enormous feet, looking not unlike a pair of large and rusty andirons, he would work away with silent energy, and with earnest face and protruding tongue, at his paper sketches.

These sketches were, in their way, quite original, and done entirely without the aid of a master.

One was a canal-boat, of unique build, drawn by a string of half a dozen fiery horses, each with its rider, and each rider having a long whip in his hand. Another, a cat with a three-cornered head. A third was a spotted dog. A fourth was a giraffe, picking cocoanuts off a poplar-tree in his native desert. "A Green Mountain Boy" was the title of another, representing a native of Vermont, the Green Mountain State, standing on the top of a mountain, dressed in short-legged trousers and long straps, short coat, and no hat, his hair and beard surrounding his face like the leaves of a sunflower.

These and such like interesting pictures were drawn with much pains and labor by Kleine, and quietly slipped into Carrie's hand, or thrown on her desk. Once in a while mistress would come round unobserved, and seeing him at this work, would tap him gently on the back with her ruler, and say:

"That 's the way thee learns to cipher, is it? Let me see thy slate."

And then exhibiting his neglected slate, with an uncompleted sum in compound addition, in the middle of which he had stuck hard and fast, he would, aided by the mistress, make a fresh attack on the despised figures, only to return, as soon as she was gone, to his unfinished Green Mountain Boy.

At another time, that sly little imp, Aaron, who thought

it the best fun in the world to steal behind a boy or girl, when deeply absorbed in a writing lesson, and give the writer's arm a sudden shove, came behind the artist and, with a jerk of his arm, sent a straight line slap through the body of a magnificent charger he was just on the point of finishing! This uncalled-for assistance was rewarded by a sharp slap in his fat little Dutch face with the back of the enraged artist's hand, which sent Master Aaron howling back to his seat near the stove.

An act like this was too serious to be passed over or condoned; so, after severely lecturing both offenders, the mistress sent the big boy to chop fire-wood for the stove during the dinner-hour, when the other boys were at play, and the little one was made to stay in the school-room to cry his hour away instead of playing it with his mates out of doors. Both these punishments were often meted out to unruly scholars whose offences were too heinous to be wiped out by the rod.

Another boy, or young man, for he was about twenty, and the oldest among us, that astonished me not a little, was one Matthew Houghton. He was fresh from somebody's barn-yard, and, I thought, always brought the odor of cows with him. He looked heavy, dull, and stupid, and, to see his small eyes and simple face, one would say he did not know enough to come in when it rained; yet this fellow had the best head for figures I ever came across. No other boy — and there were several very clever at arithmetic — could touch him. Sums in square root or duodecimals, that would stagger anybody else, this ungainly cow-catcher would laugh at. He walked through the arithmetic, as one of the boys said, "like a streak of lightning through a gooseberry bush."

When I left the school that winter Matthew was begin-

ning a course of book-keeping by single-entry, according to a ready-made system at the end of his arithmetic, and when I next heard of him he was clerk in a country store somewhere in the back-woods.

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM GOING TO SCHOOL TO DRIVING OXEN.

MUCH as my mind loves to dwell on the reminiscences of those few weeks at the country school, and to conjure up the scenes and characters as I remember them, I cannot say they were days of unmixed pleasure.

Nearly all the boys were sons of well-to-do farmers, and, though civil enough towards me, they could not altogether disguise their feeling of superiority over one who was only an apprentice, and a dependent of one of their class. It was about the last place one would think of looking for *caste*, yet even here society had its distinctions, though perhaps in as mild and harmless a form as they could well be. The man who owned a good fat farm could not recognize his poorer neighbor, without possessions, as an equal in social rank, though he might, as a man and a brother, and outside of his own family, see no difference whatever. But human nature is human nature all the world over, and though we may have perfect "equality before the law," it is vain to expect social equality anywhere.

Mild as this spirit was among my good-natured schoolmates, I could not help at times feeling chafed by it, and never failed to resent it when it cropped up. It was not

long before I was called on, through the exceptional rudeness of one of the boys, to maintain my position by force.

A Dutch boy about my own age, named Kauffman, was fond of expressing his contempt for *town boys*, and said many insulting things about them, for my special benefit. Kauffman, though no taller than myself, was a burly, thick-set, bull-headed fellow, with a pair of prominent bull's eyes in his head in perfect keeping with the rest of his person. For strength he had not his match in the school among boys of his own age and size. The person of this little giant was always set off with a flaming waistcoat of black and red stripes, and a neckerchief of an equally gaudy pattern. He was a rival of his long-legged neighbor, Kleine, for the smiles of Carrie, but, not having Kleine's accomplishments in drawing, he tried his best to balance this disadvantage by a striking costume. I believe his education was as much retarded as Kleine's — as well as some others — by his hapless love for the pretty girl.

Whether Kauffman's insults had anything to do with jealousy at seeing me so often by the side of Carrie, in the same class — where he could not be — I cannot say, but they at last became unbearable.

The hour from twelve to one was spent by the boys, after a hasty meal in the school-room, in ball-play and other sports, in a field back of the house. It was on one of these occasions that a dispute arose about the game, in which Kauffman and I took opposite sides. Sharp words followed. The lie was given and returned. Then came the challenge, and probably for the first time at that school a regular stand-up fight took place! Indeed, I doubt very much if any boy there had ever seen a fisticuff before, much less been in one. A friendly wrestle they may have

often seen, or even taken part in one, but fighting was against their natures. And as to my antagonist, the very first movement he made showed me he was a fool at it. I had seen and been in far too many fights in the city not to know something about it. At the public school where I had last been were nearly three hundred boys, and hardly a day passed there without one or more battles among them. A word was all that was necessary to set a couple by the ears.

"What did you throw that pen at me for?"

"I did n't throw it."

"You lie. You did throw it; I saw you."

"You daresen't tell me that out of school."

"Daresen't I? You wait till after school, and you 'll see if I daresen't."

Then it was whispered about that part of the school, to the great delight of the other boys, that there was going to be a fight between Jim This and Jack That after dinner; and it was very strange if one of them, at least, did not come back with a black eye or a cut lip. If fighting was not reduced to a science, it certainly was to a system, and to violate any of its rules would bring down on the offender the indignation and united howls of all the lookers-on.

Don't strike below the chest; don't strike after you 've got him down; don't kick, were rules as sacred as the Constitution of the United States. And if any boy was lucky or unlucky enough to fall on top of his opponent, he was jerked off, before he had time to get off himself, with a suddenness that made his head swim.

So when Master Kauffman came rushing at me, with his head bent, and showing only the whites of his eyes, intending to catch me round the waist and throw me, I

let fly at him with my right fist, hitting him plump on the cheek, and sent him and his sensation waistcoat reeling to the ground. This was no part of his calculation, nor of the lookers-on either.

Gathering himself up again, he threw off his coat, revealing his striped waistcoat in its full beauty, and, abandoning his battering-ram tactics, threw his arms about like a wind-mill, and came rushing on like a young buffalo bull.

Again I hit him, this time square on the mouth, and sent him staggering to the snow.

A third round was prevented by the artist stepping in between us and ending the battle.

This affair produced a decided sensation in the school, and, excepting the mistresses, raised me in the eyes of all there. To use a commercial phrase, city stock went up to a high premium at once. But how can I describe the horror of Aunt Mary, when the puffed and scarred face of her pupil met her eyes?

"Jonas, come here! What has thee been doing to make thy face in that state?" she asked, as all the gaping crowd of boys and girls watched the proceeding in a dead silence. But no answer came from Jonas.

"I ask thee again what caused those bruises?"

"Mit him," was the only answer that came from the lips of Jonas, as he turned his disfigured face towards me.

"Henry Sellers, I want thee. Come here! Is this what thee comes to school for?"

"It was n't my fault. He has been trying to pick a quarrel with me ever since I came to the school, and to-day he told me I lied."

"Then it was thy duty to come and tell me. Thee had no right to take the punishment in thy own hands.

I am ashamed to see that my school has been disgraced, and so bad an example set to the other boys by such savage conduct, for such actions are only befitting savages. I cannot pass so serious a matter by, and I am only thinking whether I ought not to expel you both from my school."

Here she paused, as if waiting for an answer, or some sign of contrition; and, getting none, she went on:

"But I will try and overlook it this time, and only this time; but as it seems you cannot be trusted together out of doors, I must keep each of you by turns at the wood-pile for a few days, during dinner-hour. As it seems that Jonas was the first to offend, he must take the first turn to-morrow."

But Jonas did not appear at school the next, or for some days after; and when he did come, with his cheeks and lips restored to their natural proportions, he took no further notice of me, nor I of him.

The fight was thought worthy of commemoration by Kleine, who devoted several hours to an elaborate sketch of it, from memory, taken at that critical juncture when Jonas, after the second round, was pitching backwards, with outstretched arms, and one foot high in the air, to the ground. This picture, like the others, found its way to Carrie, and caused no small amount of tittering at the girls' desk.

The affair, greatly exaggerated, reached Caleb's ears, and I thought not only he, but Joshua and his boy, treated me with a good deal more respect for some time afterwards.

My short term of six weeks came to an end only too soon, for if I did not add much to my slender stock of knowledge, the relief from the dull drudgery of the farm, and

the partial escape from Martha's petty persecutions, made it at least an agreeable change for me.

Happily, our time for remaining at that farm was fast drawing to a close, for otherwise I cannot tell what the intolerable behavior of that woman might have driven me to. Caleb had come to an agreement with Daniel Faulkner for the rental of his farm, on trial, for one year, with the option of a renewal, or a purchase, if satisfied. The conditions were that, during Caleb's occupancy of the farm, all the grain crops were to be divided equally between the two men.

The confidence shown by Daniel in Caleb's farming ability, and the compliment his offer implied, was a source of much self-gratulation to the latter, for no man about there was more highly esteemed than Daniel Faulkner. His farm was a fine one, of one hundred and sixty acres, well fenced, and with good-sized, substantial stone buildings. It was, besides, very near the village of Friendship; and this alone was supposed to be, by most people, a great advantage. Even Martha became facetious, and indulged in a good deal of harmless nonsense, when speaking of our becoming *citizens* of the famous village. She hoped we would not become spoilt by city vices, and led astray by city vanities and dissipations, and what not, at all of which I laughed heartily, as I could well afford to do, when I thought of the distance it would place between her and me.

To my great joy, therefore, preparations for removing began to be made in the next month, March, after I left school. I knew well enough my work would be as hard in the new place as in the old; but there would be fewer masters and mistresses to worry and badger me. And as to my companion, Dick, such was the contempt I had

come to feel for him, owing to his tale-bearing propensities, that I was only too pleased to get away from where he was. We had never had a serious quarrel, but, as with our masters, the place was getting far too hot to hold us much longer.

The tenth of March was a day of great stir and excitement. At four o'clock in the morning all hands were about and aiding in the work of removal. Several wagon-loads of goods — tools, implements, and provender — had been already taken away; and now came the house furniture, milking and dairy utensils, live-stock, and other things in daily use, or needing our personal care.

Martha, Rachel, and the infant Joshua, were mounted on Caleb's wagon. Rachel's chief concern was to protect her child from the cold March wind, and the heavy jolting of the wagon over the rough, early spring roads, whilst Martha took charge of sundry frail household articles requiring special care. Joshua followed, with his wagon loaded with a miscellaneous lot of things, as provender, poultry, and furniture, and, fastened to the rear of his wagon, and following in its wake, was that pride of the family, the "cheer."

On Dick and me devolved the duty of mustering and driving the animals to their new home. These included cows, hogs, and pigs, and a few sheep, of a particularly wiry and active breed.

I have no desire to dwell on the labor or the agony of the few hours spent in the navigation of those headstrong animals, though the details would fill a chapter by themselves. Our course lay due west, and was as plain, straight, and easy as could be desired by either man or beast; but there is no point of the compass that we did not go over again and again, so that, instead of an easy and peaceful

march of an hour or so, we wasted a whole valuable morning in scouring the country, on either side of us, in trying to keep the fugitives on the straight and narrow path that led to Friendship.

For a wonder, neither Caleb nor Joshua found any fault with us this time; but probably they thought it only too fortunate that we got there at all with all our herd intact, without accident or loss.

Faulkner's farm was one of the best cultivated ones in the whole township. It was situated on the high road, and instead of the ordinary and unsightly rail fence, the house and farm buildings were divided from the road by a good board, whitewashed fence, which gave the place the appearance of great neatness. About two hundred feet from the highway stood the buildings, consisting of a good two-story stone house, shaded by a row of tall poplars in front; a stone and wood barn, with ample accommodation for a large number of horses, cows, etc.; wagon-sheds, gig-house, hog-pens, wood-shed, and other conveniences — everything, indeed, for farming on a respectable and successful scale, with anything like fair management and capital. Unfortunately for both the farm and its owner, the new tenant did not possess these qualifications, or if he did, he did not use them.

Faulkner, much to the regret of the neighbors, with whom both he and his wife were very popular, was obliged, through failing health, to leave for a more genial clime, and the attempt of Caleb Thomas to fill his place turned out unsatisfactory to all concerned. With only one idea — to slave and to save — Caleb took possession with the clear intention of putting as little as possible on and taking as much as possible off the place during his tenancy, whatever time that might be. His first step was to fill up,

as far as he was absolutely obliged to do, his meagre stock of farming utensils and animals. He needed other horses than the two he had, besides oxen, ploughs, carts — everything. But very few of these were bought, and he trusted to luck to get on without the others. A fine young span of oxen and a cart to match were got for my use. These and the two horses were all the animal power we had of our own. With them we did the spring ploughing, harrowing, and carting, and it was not till some time after we settled there that any manual labor was hired at all.

Indoors it was much the same. Domestic help was a scarce article at all times, even in that populous county, and when obtained its duration was most uncertain; so that, none happening to be available just then, all the various household duties, including cooking, baking, washing, and ironing, fell to Rachel's lot. But she got through with it all somehow, and nursed her baby besides.

My own duties — always enough for one pair of hands — were now increased by an occasional turn at cradle-rocking in the evening, after the day's work was done.

All the milking and churning fell on me too. But it would be impossible to enumerate the multitudinous duties performed by me and expected of me at that time. No slave ever worked harder or under greater pressure than I did. One relief, and one only, I sometimes had, and that was when sent with my ox-cart to do some sort of light job, such as going to mill, or to the woods to fetch a load of fuel, I was comparatively free and happy. On all these errands I was accompanied by Paddy, a fine half-grown bull-dog, who took as much pleasure in following the oxen as I did.

To wander about the woods with whip in my right hand and axe over my left shoulder, in search of fallen branches

to load my cart with, Paddy snuffing about the holes and hollow trunks of trees for game, was my great delight. I was alone in the quiet woods, with the only companions I cared for, and no one to vex or worry me.

But, poor Paddy! though long since dead and past all pain, I have not forgotten a scene we were once actors in in those same woods. A neighbor's hogs had broken into them many times, through his own fences, and, finding them there one day, I determined to give them a lesson they would not forget. So, giving the word to the dog, away he bounded and, seizing one of them by the ear, he shook it until the woods resounded with the cries of the unhappy brute. But it is easier to set a bull-dog on anything than to get him off again. So it proved with him. Over and over again I called to him, but all to no purpose. He had made up his mind to have the hog's ear off, whether or no. Taking up a stick, I threw it at him from where I stood, little dreaming it would hurt him, but it struck him straight across his eyes, and sent him yelping away in great agony. The poor dog was nearly blind for a week, but I don't think he suffered more than I did myself.

If a consolation to me sometimes, the oxen were at others a sore vexation of spirit. Young, half-broken, and perverse, I had at first no end of trouble with them in trying to lead them in the way they should go.

One day I went to mill with a few sacks of wheat and rye, walking all the way by the side of my cattle, for up to that time I had not ventured to drive them from the cart. Returning from mill my course lay through the village, and when within a mile or so of it, thinking the animals were tired, and that my opportunity had come, I mounted the cart and quietly waited the result. Catch-

ing sight of me seated behind them, they seemed to look inquiringly at each other, and then to decide promptly what was best to be done. First they set out in a gentle run; then away they pelted as hard as they could tear towards Friendship! Believing they would soon see the folly of the course they were pursuing, and give it up, I at first thought it excellent fun. But I was mistaken, and was soon brought to a sense of the ridiculousness of my own position, to say nothing of its danger.

To go rushing through that sober village in broad daylight, behind a pair of runaway steers, was not a cheerful prospect, though it might give the inhabitants a sensation. Had I been a reckless dare-devil, like young Klimer, I should have been in my glory, and made the most of the opportunity for showing myself and my oxmanship off. But alarm was uppermost in my mind; so I stood up and shouted at the top of my voice to the impetuous beasts: Woa — Woa — Woa — Woho, Buck; Woho, Berry! Though the ox may know his master, and sometimes have great respect for him, neither Buck nor Berry showed the least regard for me or my commands, but went bowling away through the town as hard as they could go. Heads were stuck out of doors and windows at the sound of the unusual noise, and in passing Dr. Smiley's house I thought I clearly descried Carrie's eyes peeping through the Venetian blinds.

At last, nearly as frightened as I was myself, the animals were brought to bay by Caleb Evans, the blacksmith, who boldly placed himself in front, and blocked their way.

"Who is that?" asked one of the men at the shop, who were waiting their turns for their horses to be shod.

"It 's Cale Thomas's boy. He 's got a pair of young cattle there," answered Caleb.

In less than fifteen minutes every inhabitant of Friendship knew that Caleb Thomas's boy had been run away with by his steers.

Caleb laughed heartily when I told him my adventure, and said:

"They 'll allers do like that at fust. Now I 'll tell thee what to do. The next time thee goes to mill, jist wait till thee gits past Enoch Evans's, — thee knows Enoch's? — where the road is clear, and then git onto thee cart, and then if they want to go, let 'em go; but as soon as ever they show any signs of stoppin' or gittin' tired, then lay on to 'em with a good hickory stick, and give it to 'em good. I guess thee won't have no great trouble with 'em after that."

On going to mill the following week, to fetch back my flour, I did exactly as Caleb directed me, and with the result he predicted. When, after running themselves out of breath, the beasts wanted to stop, I leaned forward, and, with my long hickory thong, lashed first one and then the other, until, utterly exhausted, and finding they had nothing to gain by their hurry, they settled down to a steady, quiet pace, and never again attempted to run away with me.

I passed through Friendship this time on my way back, seated on my sack of flour, a conqueror, instead of a fugitive, and cared not who saw me.

A little later on, I found myself in a still more serious scrape, through the frowardness of these steers. I was out very early one morning before breakfast, harrowing a field that, the year before, had been planted with potatoes, and which had just been ploughed by Caleb for a crop of Indian corn. The oxen, as well as myself, were as hungry as wolves, and whenever their greedy eyes caught sight

of a potato, which the plough had by chance thrown up, they found the temptation too much for them, and leaving the straight line of duty, would turn aside and rush for the potato. This was altogether too much for my patience. It was quite hard enough to follow the harrow, and by perpetual jerking and pulling keep it in its place, on the rough, upturned clods of earth. In vain I thrashed them. In vain I bawled at them until I was hoarse. Have the potato they would, and after one taste of them they were always on the alert for others. In these trying circumstances I was provoked into using some strong, but not profane, language, which, as ill luck would have it, was carried by a too favorable wind towards the barn. Here, as soon as I reached it, on my way to breakfast, a repetition of the old scene at the hog-pen, the year before, took place. My master was there waiting, all cocked and primed, ready for battle.

Snatching the whip out of my hand, he demanded, with a look of peculiar savageness:

"I want to know what thee means by cussin' and swearin' in that there way out there in the field?"

"Swearin'? I did n't swear at all. I never swear. I was only jawin' at the steers, because I could n't make 'em mind."

"Don't tell me none of that there nonsense. I was a-listenin' to thee all the time, and heerd thee. Did n't I tell him if ever I ketched him a-swearin' I 'd switch him, hey?"

"I tell you again I did n't swear. If you strike me it will be the last time you 'll ever do it," I said, with a fierceness equal to his own, and looking him full in the face.

"What does thee mean by that, hey?"

And at the same time he brought the long lash of the

whip, with a twirl, round my back and bare legs. Thereupon I sprang back into the barn, and, with the agility of a cat, up into the hay-loft, where pursuit would have been useless. Stung to desperation by the injury, I was ready to go any length in defending myself against any further attack. Fortunately, none was attempted, but, after a short silence, my master called out, in a voice greatly softened:

"Now come down and feed his cattle, and then he can come in to his breakfast," after which he took his way to the house.

But I had no intention of going to the house to breakfast, hungry as I was; so after unyoking and feeding the steers, I went and threw myself on the barn floor, and there fell to musing as to what course I should take. It was not long before Rachel came up to me, and, in a kind and coaxing way, said:

"Why, Henry; why don't thee come in to thee breakfast?"

"Because I 'm not comin' to breakfast," I answered, sullenly. "I 'm not goin' to allow myself to be thrashed for nothing any longer."

"Well, never mind; Caleb won't touch thee again. I told him mebbee he was mistaken in what he heered. Now come, my boy, thee must be hungry," and then taking me by the hand, she tried to lead me away.

"No; if I go in at all, it will be after Caleb 's done."

"Very well; he is goin' to the blacksmith's with Jenny after breakfast, and then thee can come in and take thee breakfast quiet."

CHAPTER IX.

JIM JIMISON.

CALEB THOMAS was not the man to acknowledge a mistake, or offer the *amende* when doing a wrong thing, especially to a mere boy, who was in his power, and helpless. He did, however, show, by an altered manner and a forced good nature, that he would be glad to have the late affair forgotten, whilst I, still smarting under the injury, and, perhaps, also with a sense of my growing importance, remained cool, and fought shy of him for some time after the occurrence.

From this time forward both he and his wife treated me with more consideration, though not a great deal, it is true. Another year or so and my time would be out, and it is not unlikely they began to think of their own reputation in the village and at the meeting-house, should their treatment of me get noised abroad — a far more likely event now than at our old place. At our meals Caleb no longer waited for me to ask for a second supply of bread, but actually forestalled the demand by placing it before me, and that too with a promptness that took away all the pain I before had of eating it.

On First-days I was allowed to go to meeting much oftener than before, for, as I have already said, they seldom went there themselves. Mixing with the crowd of men and lads under the sheds, it was not long before I got to know the different equipages of the Amoses, Benjamins, Calebs, Daniels, Enochs, Felixes, and so on, down to Zachariahs, as soon as I saw them entering the enclosure. The fair Carrie could also be seen any First-day morning,

sitting demurely among the other females at their end of the house. But whether she ever took the trouble to look towards where I sat is extremely doubtful.

My clothing, it is true, continued to be of the most scanty description possible, summer and winter; but to make amends for this, Rachel, when in her pleasant moods, would sometimes make playful and mysterious allusion to the *freedom suit* which was in store for me when my time should be out. When the exigencies of my situation positively demanded a renewal of any article of dress, Rachel would be sure to make it the occasion for blowing her trumpet over it. Looking sympathetically at me, she would say, in a tone of mock distress:

"Now, Caly, thee *must* git Henry a new pair of pants. He wants 'em; and I *will* have him look like other boys, as long as he is my boy."

"Very well. I'm a-goin' to town in a week or two, and I reckon we'll be able to fix him up with some pants and a jacket, too, then. If that there Jim Jimison comes accordin' to his promise, mebbee I'll take Henry along with me to town."

"Well, whatever thee gits for him, mind thee gits good fittin' things. I ain't a-goin' to have him the scarecrow he is no longer."

"Yas, I guess we can make him all right when we're in town," said my master, somewhat wearily, as though he had had enough of the subject. Then, turning to me, as I was about to leave the table, he added: "Now, Henry, if he's done his breakfast, I want him to go on with harrowin' that there cornfield."

The name of Jim Jimison awakens a host of reminiscences, more or less interesting, of life and events on Faulkner Farm. The impracticability of working a farm

of that size, though about thirty acres of it were woodland, even in ordinary times, without extra help from outside, soon forced itself on Caleb's understanding. If he did not know it at first, he soon found that two pairs of hands could not do everything, willing as they might be; and that economy, however good in a general way, might be carried a step too far. Hence, as the season advanced, the services of Jim Jimison began to be called in very often. Rachel, too, now that her active little sister was no longer near to help her in times of need, found her work was too much for her, and was forced to beg the assistance of such of her poorer neighbors as would condescend to come to her.

Like every other country village, Friendship had its queer characters, whose eccentricities were the talk or the sport of the place. James Jamieson, or "Jim Jimison," the name he was best known by, was one of these, and to know him once was to remember him always. Jim was about thirty, tall, thin, and wiry. In all his movements he was as supple as a fox; and as he seldom walked, but ran, his eyes, like the fox's, keeping pace with the active motion of his body, were turning nervously in all directions. This peculiarity, and the half-frightened expression his face habitually wore, gave one the impression that *fear of arrest* was his besetting trouble. His arms, too, as if in sympathy with his legs, when running, kept up a perpetual beating of the air, as though ready for any surprise, come from whatever quarter it might.

In warm weather Jim generally went about barefooted; but at times he might be seen wearing long boots over his trousers' legs, and at others with one boot and one shoe on his feet.

Though a crack-brained, ne'er-do-well fellow, he was

quite inoffensive and very good-natured. Under the worst of luck he was always light-hearted and uncomplaining. His father, old Sammy Jamieson, was at one time a well-to-do farmer, but four sons, all pretty much of Jim's stripe, had, through their recklessness and extravagance, nearly run the old man down to the ground. There was only this one left in the neighborhood, the others having gone to seek their fortunes elsewhere, and he got his living by working for the farmers about, catching and selling leeches and doing team work — for, poor as he was, Jim had his team of two horses and a wagon, and these horses were, in their way, almost as much of a curiosity as their owner. One was a bay mare of good height, but thin and weedy like her master; the other was a small horse with wall-eyes — a good worker, but a terrible kicker.

It was a real treat to watch Jim, seated on his rickety wagon, head erect and eyes snapping with pride, as his two unmatched screws, driven abreast, tugged and jerked him and his load of stones or timber over the rough, uneven road. His belief in their power, too, was marvellous, for he was always ready to back one or both of them to pull against any man's horses in the village, or the county either, for that matter. Though quizzed unmercifully by the neighbors about his horses, he was none the less fond of them for all that.

One evening, when about to leave our place after a day's work with his team, Caleb tackled him about them.

"Jim, why don't thee sell that there critter and git one bigger to match the mare? He ain't nowheres alongside o' her!"

"This horse!" bawled Jim, as he fired up with excitement; "there ain't a better little horse in the county!

I 'll back him again ere-a-one of thy horses for pullin', big as they are."

"Oh, thee knows better than that, Jim. Ere-a-one of mine would drag him clean out of his skin before he knowed what was the matter with him."

"They would, eh! I 'd like to see one uv 'em try it, that 's all."

"Very well; we 'll give him a chance to show us what he kin do. Henry, thee go and putt the gears on Rock, and fetch him out here. We 'll lock the wheels of this here wagon, and see which 'll pull it the furdest."

Nothing loath, Jim at once made his jaded little nag fast to the end of the wagon-tongue, whilst Caleb locked the hind wheels, and I led out the other horse. Then, when all was ready, Jim spoke to his horse, who, giving a preliminary and spiteful kick or two at the wagon-tongue, made a desperate lunge forward, and dragged his load a couple of yards or more, when he was stopped by his master.

"There you are!" said Jim, with a look of triumphant satisfaction first at one and then at the other of us, as though the question was just as good as settled already. "Now chuck on a couple of hundredweight of sumthen. I 'll show you what he can do!" A sack of potatoes was thrown into the wagon. "Barney!" shouted Jim to his horse. But Barney declined this time to put himself out, and, after another kick and a spasmodic jerk at the load, gave it squarely up.

The other horse was then hitched to the wagon-pole, and at a word from his master moved off with his load in an easy, steady way, that would have shaken the faith of any other man than Jim in his own horse. Then Caleb quietly turned his horse round and drew the wagon back

to its place, the wheels still locked and potatoes on board.

All this made no sort of difference to Jim. He jumped on his little horse and rode off, looking as proud as a man who has just won a thousand dollars in hard cash.

But, with all his peculiarities, Jim proved himself a most useful man to Caleb. And as to myself, I took a great liking to him, for he was always amusing, if nothing else. I was not sorry, therefore, when I heard that he was in future to occupy a part of our house and barn for himself and his horses. The house was larger than we needed, and, having separate entrances, was well adapted for the accommodation of two families. At that time he was single, and about the last man, one would suppose, who would seriously think of matrimonial entanglements. But, as we afterwards found out to our surprise, they were the one thing uppermost in his thoughts.

It was thus that Jim Jimison became one of the moving figures on our farm; and, being a kind of sub-tenant, and only working there when it suited his purpose, he enjoyed whatever privileges the position entitled him to. A few days after he took possession of his rooms my master made preparations for another journey to the city, with whatever slender stock of marketables he was able to get together to load a one-horse wagon with, and, leaving Jim to look after his and my duties, took me with him.

It was not to gratify me that he did so, but for the use I might be to him on the way and in the market. But, no matter what the motive was, a visit to the city was to me always a very great pleasure, and the longer I was separated from it the dearer it became to me. Nevertheless, in spite of all the rough treatment I had met with, and

the disappointment I had experienced of country life, my heart still clung to the country; and had the choice then been given me of remaining in town or returning to Bucks County, I should have chosen the latter alternative, without doubt.

The usual three days for going to market passed over, and we found ourselves home again, Caleb the richer by a few dollars, Rachel by a few new personal trappings, myself by a new and cheap suit of ready-made clothes, and all of us by a fresh stock of groceries. All had gone right about the place during our absence, and Jim Jimison rose in the general estimation accordingly.

In these market journeys it was customary for farmers to take charge of commissions, deliver messages, and attend to various matters of business in the city for their neighbors. For one, the carriage and delivery of a letter, and the return, possibly, of an answer, verbal or written. For another, the purchase of groceries, hardware, or dry-goods. Another would send some farm produce to be sold. Thus, after disposing of his own goods, and settling his own affairs, the good-natured man would have to spend hours, and oftentimes walk many miles about town in looking after these troublesome and profitless affairs; and on his return home hours more were spent in delivering commissions, reporting answers to messages, and gossipping at the doors and gates of those persons.

A few days after our return from the city, and just before haymaking began, Jim suddenly disappeared, in a somewhat mysterious manner, taking with him his two horses, but not his wagon. Another man, who had often come to help us by the day of late, was now hired by the month during the summer, or as long as he might be

wanted. This man was Johnny Wilson, a negro, who had once been a Southern slave, but had made his escape and settled in our neighborhood. John was about five-and-thirty, short, stout, and powerful, and as happy a little darkey as ever handled an axe or swung a flail. When alone at his work, he was always singing his favorite songs, brought with him from his Southern home. If his voice was not very melodious, it was, at least, deep and powerful; and so unaccustomed had my ear become to any music but that of birds, that, when John's voice came rolling across the field, when at our early morning labor, he at the plough and I at the harrow, to the words,

> "O the day is a-breaking, I say,
> The day is a-breaking, I say,
> For them that's in bed, when they ought to be up,
> It's high time to be jogging away,"

the weird, melancholy tones struck on my ear like a warning from another world.

Johnny lived with us, and took his meals when we did, but at a little table of his own, in one corner of the kitchen, where we all ate. It was at first proposed that he should sit at our table, but, after being duly discussed, the proposal was negatived, and John was put in the corner; and much better for him, too, for there he could help himself without fear or favor.

In the afternoon of Sunday following Jim Jimison's disappearance, I was standing, dressed in my new "store clothes," in front of the house, busily engaged in the profitless occupation of cutting my initials on the bark of one of the poplars standing there. Caleb and Rachel were seated in the cool shade of the trees, amusing themselves with their infant son, and criticising such travellers

as happened to be driving along the road from time to time. Johnny lay asleep on the grass near by, whilst the faithful Paddy was stretched at full length in close proximity, and now and again raised his head to snap at the flies that disturbed his repose.

I had just finished, in imposing Roman capitals, the letters H. S., and had got as far as 18 in the date, when Caleb approached, and, smiling at my humble efforts at carving in wood, said, with the utmost good-nature:

"Why, Henry, is that the way he spends his First-day afternoons? Ef he wants to leave his name behind him, I guess he'd better take some other day to do it than First-day; had n't he, eh?"

I said I had not given the matter of time a thought, and then closed my knife, though I might have asked what other day I could have taken for it, without getting my head knocked off.

"Now ef I'd a sot him to makin' them there figgers to-day, he'd a thought it a putty hard job; would n't he?" he added, with a facetious twist of his face, and with a truthfulness that struck me with the force of a cannon-ball.

At that moment our attention was drawn to an approaching light-spring wagon, some distance down the road. A second look descried the white face of Jim's little horse, and by his side was ambling his lanky mate. A minute more and Jim himself, with his restless eyes twinkling, now on us, and now on a person by his side, was discovered seated in the vehicle. The cat was now out of the bag. The sly rascal had prepared a big surprise for us, in the shape of a bride in all her charms.

"Henry, run and open the gate for Jim, will thee?" said Caleb, as the wagon was squared round to enter it.

I went accordingly to open the gate, and was hailed by Jim:

"How d' y' do, Harry! Thank 'e — thank 'e."

Then the wagon entered and headed towards the poplars. Paddy barked furiously at it, but dropped his tail as soon as he saw his mistake, and settled down quietly again to sleep.

Johnny rolled his eyes in the right direction at once when the dog barked, and then, taking in the whole thing at a glance, stood ready to do what was needful.

Rachel took Joshua in her arms and stared hard at the bride, and the bride, in return, looked at Rachel and her baby sympathetically.

The wagon came to a dead halt under the poplars, and Jim, arrayed in a blue dress-coat, yellow nankeen trousers, and a black hat, alighted, blushed immoderately, and then went to lift his wife down.

Mrs. Jamieson was a bouncing and comely Dutch woman, past the age of girlhood, and the daughter of an inn-keeper living in another part of the county. Jim, by some accident, had seen her, and then courted and conquered her. Julietta was her name, and about fifteen stone was her weight. Whether this last circumstance had anything to do with Jim's pride in her I don't know, but a happier man than he looked when she dropped into his arms out of the wagon I never wish to see.

The introductions were simple and unceremonious. Caleb first advanced, all smiles and confusion, and shook hands with the bride. He tried his best to be polite, and said he was glad to see her, although she had n't given us any notice of her coming. To which she made no answer, but smiled vacantly at everybody and everything.

Rachel then came forward and shook hands with her, and, hearing her name from Jim, said:

"Well, Julietta, how does thee do? How did thee leave thy folks at home?" Getting a satisfactory answer to both questions, she then turned to Jim with a pretence of scolding him: "Why did n't thee tell us thee was a-goin' to bring thee wife home to-day, so that we might a' got sumthin' ready for her? It 's too bad of thee to come on us unbeknown like this. Thee 's a good-for-nothin', rotten fellow, that 's jist what thee is."

"I understand erzacly how it is," interposed Caleb. "He was afeered Julietta would n't have him when he got there, and so he tho't it better to say nothin' till he made sure of her."

And then, overcome with laughter at his ingenious solution of the affair, he put his hands into his pantaloons pockets and shook himself vigorously.

Poor Jim was too much confused himself to do more than stammer out a few unintelligible sentences, and his wife, never much of a talker, made no attempt to help him out of his muddle.

It was then arranged that, whilst the two couples went in to tea, Johnny and I should unload the wagon of the sundry articles which Julietta had brought along as her contribution to the house-keeping stock. The wagon — borrowed of a friend in the village — was returned the following day.

Had Jim Jimison not been the loose, rackety fellow he was, the Society of Friends, of which, through his family relations, he was supposed to be a member, would have called him to an account, if not expelled him, for marrying out of the pale of the society. But either he had ceased to be regarded as a member, or else was consid-

ered as too black a sheep to be worth looking after, and so was allowed to pass unnoticed. His wife was a thorough Pennsylvania Dutchwoman, with all their love of dress and finery, and probably thought as little as Jim himself about religion. So that, as the question was never raised by the Society, he perhaps never knew, nor cared, which side of the fence he was on.

CHAPTER X.

AN ADVENTURE WITH A BULL.

ONE very hot afternoon I was sent to mill with a wagon-load of clover, for the extraction of the seed for another year's sowing. The distance each way was eight or nine miles, and, in order that the oxen might be saved from the effects of the excessive midday heat, as well as to give them the benefit of the cooler night air in returning, it was thought desirable that I should start as late as possible in the afternoon. Consequently, it was nearly dark when I reached the mill; and when I again turned my face towards home, after unloading my wagon and feeding and resting my cattle, night had already set in. Then, mounting my empty wagon, I let the tired beasts take their own slow pace along the dusty, lonely road. The dog, Paddy, followed, sometimes close to the wagon, and at others far away in the woods and fields, but always within hail.

Though the sky was clear, and every star in the "spacious firmament" shone with particular brilliancy, and countless numbers of little fire flies flitted through the

heavy, sultry air, the road before me seemed dark and dismal to a degree. The little traffic there had been along it in the day-time had now ceased, and the solemn stillness was unbroken, except by an occasional shout I raised to encourage my oxen, or the sharp crack of my whip, which resounded again and again through the woods and hills about me. I knew the road very well myself, and, supposing the oxen would be sure to follow its straight course, I gradually, after some hours of watchfulness, relaxed my vigilance, and then, sinking into the bottom of the wagon, fell fast asleep.

I must have been there upwards of an hour, when I awakened by the sudden stoppage of the wagon. Then the low, angry bellow of a bull caught my ear. My first impulse was to rush to the heads of my cattle, and the second to call aloud for my dog.

Already the oxen, quaking with fear, were beginning to turn, as their enemy, bent on mischief, approached towards them.

In an instant I saw what had happened. My team had left the main road, and then, following a narrow byway, had plunged right in the midst of a herd of cows, who, with their bull, had strayed into the woods, which lined the road on both sides of us. It was this intrusion that now raised the ire of the bull, and provoked his attack on the unoffending steers.

Under ordinary circumstances, I should not have dared to face such an animal, but would have given him a very wide berth. Now, however, the situation was far too serious, and my responsibility too great to allow of even a thought of personal safety. Even as it was, my own efforts to protect my oxen would have been entirely futile, without the aid of the dog.

The bull lost no time in making his attack. The oxen, hampered by their yoke and wagon, could neither run nor defend themselves, even if so minded; but in their panic they simply tossed their heads, and pulled and tugged, in a desperate effort to break away from each other and their confinement. The bull's first rush was direct for the head of the off ox; but its force was broken by coming in contact with the very yoke that bound the hapless beast. It was then that, raising the butt end of my heavy leather cart-whip, studded with brass nails, I dealt the enemy a heavy blow on his right eye. This had the effect of driving him from the front to the side of the ox. He had no quarrel with me, and therefore took no notice of me.

There, in less than half a minute, the now infuriated animal would have torn the insides out of that ox, and laid him dead on the ground, but for the timely and fortunate arrival of the dog on the scene of action. He had been away foraging about the woods, or looking for vermin, but, on hearing my call, had, like a faithful dog that he was, hurried to the spot.

"Here, Paddy! here, here! catch him! catch him!" I cried, as I trembled with excitement, and the perspiration rolled down my face.

But Paddy did not need to be told what to do. His eyes told him at once what the matter was, and his bull-dog instinct told him where to make the attack. He went for the bull's nose, with as much certainty as the needle points to the pole.

But the bull had his instinct as well as the dog, and, seeing the new danger, he instantly dropped the attack on the ox and took up his defence against the dog. It was a sharp contest between cool intelligence and activity

on one side, and power and desperation on the other. The contest was soon decided, for the bull found that attacking a poor, helpless ox, and fighting an active young dog, who knew his business, were two very different things. So after a good deal of skirmishing, with no small amount of bellowing on one side, and growling and snapping on the other, the dog got his teeth firmly fixed in the bull's nose.

In a twinkling Paddy was raised five feet in the air, his body forming a straight line with the bull's back, but with his teeth still clinging with the tenacity of a vice to that favorite feature of his antagonist.

A second attempt was made to toss the dog and throw him off, but this was a greater failure than the first, and then, so far as the bull was concerned, the struggle was given up. The dog fairly pinned him to the earth! and then, dropping on his knees, his whole frame quivering with pain, he made the woods echo again with his roaring. Even the cows, who up to that time had been passive spectators of the scene, came up, with wondering eyes and ears erect, to see what the noise was all about.

Whilst this contest was going on I was busily engaged in turning my wagon, which, in that narrow roadway, and in the then demoralized state of the oxen, was a work of no small difficulty. With a cart the animals might have turned themselves and fled at the first sign of danger; but with a wagon it was different, and in our fright and hurry to turn we narrowly escaped upsetting as it was. Now, although the danger was passed, I was as anxious as my oxen to leave a place that had given us so warm a reception; and, with a parting but quite unnecessary cry to my dog: "Shake him, Paddy; shake him," I hurried away, with the noise of the bull still ringing in my ears.

The dog soon followed, however, and, although he was the most important if not the chief actor in the affair, he was the least affected by it of any of the party, for in ten minutes or less he was snuffing about the fields again as though nothing unusual had happened to him. And I believe nothing would have pleased him better than to fall in with just such another bull.

On the following morning, at the breakfast-table, Caleb said:

"Why, Henry, what time did thee git home last night? I did n't hear thee come in!"

"No; I did n't come in the house. I got back about two o'clock — I think it must have been, and I went in the hayloft to sleep."

"Why, what was the matter? What kept him all that time? He did n't git onto a spree anywheres, did he?"

Then I told all the circumstances of the mistake in the road and the encounter with the bull.

"And is his steers hurt?"

"Only one of them. Berry has got a few pretty bad digs on his off-side."

"That there comes o' goin' to sleep when he ought to a' ben lookin' after his steers."

"Yes; I fell asleep without knowin' it."

"He 's a pretty fellow to be trusted with oxen! now, ain't he? Does thee know whose bull it was?"

"No; I don't. It was on a strange road; that road that turns off near the old brick tavern."

"How fur along the road was it?"

"It must have been a couple of miles, I guess."

"Two mile, eh? Why, that there must a' ben Sammy Roberts's bull. John, thee knows those parts there.

Who lives near to that woods, about a couple of mile from the brick tavern?"

"Yes; I reckon it must a' ben Sam Roberts's bull. He's de on'y man round dem parts dat I know of dat's got one. What kuller was de bull — red, wid white hine legs?"

"Yes; I think that was his color. Any way, he had white hind legs."

"Den it must a' ben Sam Roberts's bull; an' it ain't de fust time he's sot onto folks like dat, nudder."

"Well, I guess I'll go to meetin' on First-day, an ef I see Sammy I'll ast him about it."

"I'm a' gwine up dat way myself on Sunday, an I'll see 'bout de bull."

The result of the inquiry was that the bull did belong to the person named; that he was found to be much mutilated and disfigured about his face, and that his owner had been perplexed to know how it happened. Samuel said he heard the bellowing, but as it ceased before he could dress and start for the place, he went to sleep again and thought no more of it.

Our own ox soon recovered from his wounds, but both he and his mate ever afterwards fought shy of the road to Sammy Roberts's when they passed along that way.

We had now got well into summer again, and the ordinary labors of the farm at this season went on much the same as the year before; but to me, although my work was as hard as ever, the life seemed to come a little pleasanter. I was more inured to it, and better able to bear the roughs and tumbles I met with. Both Caleb and Rachel had got to be a little kinder and more forbearing, and I felt that even the humble friendship of Johnny, as well as Jimison and his wife, was an advantage to me.

It was far more agreeable as well as improving to listen to Johnny's simple stories of slave-life down on the North Carolina plantations, with all their amusing and tragic incidents, as we worked together in the fields or the woods, than the stupid, cow-boy jargon of the boy Dick, at the other place. And as to Jim, whenever he worked with us — which was only occasionally — he was always amusing, though not very instructive. His wife, too, though in a general way as dull and phlegmatic as a prize pig, had a warm, honest heart, and took kindly to me from the first.

All this, and the privilege of going to meeting on First-days occasionally, with all its pleasant associations and soothing religious influences, took the rough edge off my daily life.

Among the other occurrences at this time was the death of Caleb's father, an old man upwards of eighty, who had a fine farm of his own about three miles from Friendship. The news, when brought over by a colored laborer of the old man's, deeply affected the son, who gave way to an emotion which I supposed was foreign to his hard nature.

Caleb decided to repair at once to his father's place, and deeming it prudent to take me along, to bring back the mare, in the event of his having to stay there, took me up behind him. But just at that moment Jim came along, and being told the mournful news, said:

"Well, Cale, there ain't no need to ride double, is ther'? Let Harry jump on Barney. I ain't a-goin' to use him now."

Jim's offer was accepted, our other horse being at work; and, mounting Barney, I accompanied my master to his father's farm, and, as he was detained there, I brought back the two horses.

Of the old man's estate Caleb was entitled to one-fifth share, the other brothers and sisters taking the remainder in equal proportions. Neither of the sons being willing or able to take and work the farm on his own account, it was decided to sell the property for the benefit of all the heirs, with as little delay as possible. It was thus advertised, in the customary form, in the county papers, and by posters headed "Vendue," stuck about the fences, and in bar-rooms of inns and taverns.

When the day of sale came, "all the world and his wife" were there, either for business, curiosity, or pleasure. The renowned Peter Hunkinson was the auctioneer on the occasion, and, of course, the centre of attraction to the crowd. There was no other auctioneer in the county who could draw so many people together as Peter, nor any, it was popularly believed, who could get such prices as he.

First the farm itself was sold, and as every one knew its value to a dollar, the competition was short, and the operation soon over. Then came the household furniture and effects, and it was here that the jolly auctioneer gave vent to his broad and irresistible humor. With each lot put up, he had something funny to say, and the fun was greatly enhanced by the broken English and rattling tongue of the speaker. Knowing every one present, he would call them by name in recommending articles to their special notice, and oftentimes with a comical appropriateness that "brought down the house," and not infrequently, also, brought forth a retort from the other side. Thus, when the old cradle, that had been in the family for half a century, was put up, Peter dwelt with much eloquence on its intrinsic value as a family appendage, on its past history, and on its prospective usefulness to

the generation to come. Then, turning towards Jim Jimison, he said:

"Now, Mr. Shimison, how much you goin' to gif me fur de gradle mit de rockers on? How much, heh? I know yer cum here a-burpose to puy it, so I gif yer der fust gance."

This sally of Peter's evoked a hearty laugh at Jim's expense, and covered that person with confusion.

"Will yer gif me five tollars fur de gradle? Four toltars? Dree tollars, den? Come, Shimison, dats sheap enuf; dats less den half a tollar a paby for rockin'."

"I'll give yer a dollar and twenty cents. That'll be ten cents for each one of my babies," cried Jim, plucking up courage, and determined to humor the joke.

The laugh was now on Jim's side, and as no one else wanted, or cared to acknowledge the want, the cradle, it was knocked down to him, amidst a good deal of merriment, and a significant hint from the auctioneer that it would accommodate either one or two babies at a time.

After the furniture came the live-stock, implements, etc., etc., which carried the sale well into the evening.

The amount received from this property by Caleb, though inconsiderable, was, when joined to his wife's legacy, sufficient to purchase a small farm of their own; and this was now the one thing uppermost in their thoughts. Whether the experiment of working the Faulkner farm on shares answered either landlord or tenant, I do not know; but it is certain that by the time harvest was over Caleb had made up his mind to not continue there another year.

If the relations between Caleb and his sub-tenant, Jim Jimison, continued peaceful, it was not from any regard or friendship they had for each other, but simply because

they found the arrangement suited their convenience. Jim's independence in seeking work wherever he found it the most profitable or agreeable, without regard to the other's necessities, caused some ill feeling, as well as an occasional tiff between them, though, it is true, no serious quarrel ensued. In the house matters were different. The two women, though as opposite in character as it was possible for two persons to be, agreed very well, and found the companionship of each other, and the mutual help they were able to render, both beneficial and pleasant.

When it was known that Caleb intended leaving the place at the year's end, Jim began to turn his attention to a new home for himself and wife; and as there seemed no probability of a suitable one presenting itself to them, what so natural as the thought of having one of his own?

"I will not be dependent on others any longer," said he. "I will have my own house; and to make sure it is my own, I will build it myself. It shall be 'The House that Jim Built.'" And so arguing this way, he selected a small plot of ground close on the highway, and then, with characteristic precipitation, went to work to collect together the materials for its construction. Every spare hour, day, or week that he could get was spent with his team in carting stone to the local habitation, where he proposed to spend the remainder of his days on earth. He threw his whole soul into the enterprise, and it was worth going some distance to see him at work, and hear him talk over and about it.

He was going to be his own architect, builder, contractor, mason, carpenter, painter, glazier, and paper-hanger, and no thanks to anybody. He levelled the ground, and then marked out his plan, with as little

trouble and time as though it was a sheep-pen or an onion-bed he was about to make. Here was to be the front room, there the kitchen, there the wash-house and dairy. The top rooms and stairs leading thereto would have to take their chance when the ground floor was done.

"First get into your house before you go to bed," said Jim to a friend who went to see how the thing was going on. He could not be got to speak about anything else but his new house, and even forgot to vote at the general election — something he had never been guilty of before!

After his ordinary day's work was done, he would hastily swallow his supper, and then tear away at the top of his speed, by a short cut across the fields, to his future homestead, and there work away like a beaver until dark.

On one of those evenings I happened to be doing something near the wood-pile, at the back of the house, when Jim passed at a distance of a hundred yards or so. He was in his shirt-sleeves, one boot and one shoe on his feet, and wore a tall and shabby black hat. His whole appearance and movements were so extremely comical that I almost involuntarily cried out, "Stop thief! stop thief!"

The cry, so unexpected and so uncomplimentary, staggered him, and brought his head round to see from whence it came. Had he seen me only there would have been an end of the matter, for, knowing it was only a joke, and having no ill will towards me, he would have simply laughed and then passed on. But, as bad luck would have it, Caleb, who was just then on his way to the house from the barn, was, unknown to me, close by me, and, witnessing the scene, he broke into a loud laugh. This was too much for even Jim's good nature! He halted;

then moved forward a step or two in an undecided sort of way; then turned sharply and came up to us, with war in every feature of his face!

Walking straight up to Caleb, he began:

"I'd like to know what you mean by hollerin' 'stop thief' after me!"

"I did n't holler nuthin' of the sort," the other answered, quite unmoved by Jim's threatening attitude, but still laughing at the joke.

"Well, if you did n't, yer boy did, and you sot him up to it. I'll let yer know I'm no more of a thief than you are. If you think I am, why don't yer tell me so to my face!" he fairly roared; and then, having worked himself into a proper fury, he slapped his hands together with a crack that made the few hens that remained scratching about the wood-pile hop with fright. This only made Caleb laugh the more, and, as he did not deny Jim's accusation, it was a clear proof — so thought Jim — of his complicity. At this moment Juliettà put her head out of the window to see what the noise was about; observing which, Jim bristled up still more, and then went on: "If yer think I'm a thief, I dare yer to say so to my face! —— me; I'll lick you and yer boy too; both of yer!"

Upon which he squared himself into a position that looked dreadfully like business, and which awoke my admiration and set me wondering where he could have picked it up! I expected to see Caleb neatly laid out on the ground then and there, and with the smallest encouragement to the other he would have been. But he stood quietly in one spot, not only unterrified, but apparently highly amused by the ridiculous exhibition, keeping his hands all the while thrust under the waistband of his

trousers, as though struggling to lift himself bodily off the ground by it.

At this juncture the two women came on the scene, and by a timely and judicious interference set matters straight, and sent Jim, still fuming like a turkey-cock, about his business. But this time he did not run; he walked quietly along the road, more determined than ever to complete his house and live alone in peace and independence.

This little quarrel, however, did not last long, for on the day following I acknowledged myself the real and only culprit, and told Jim the other had nothing to do with it. Thus this tremendous conflagration, growing out of so very small a spark, happily ended in smoke. But had Jim still wanted revenge, he had only to wait a few days to find it in one of his own horses.

As Caleb was passing behind the horses in the stable, just after their morning feed had been given them, quite unconscious of any danger, he received from Barney a sharp kick on his hip, which sent him headlong into the feed-box close at hand. A moment afterwards Jim came in and found him thrashing his horse most unmercifully, whilst all the other horses stood trembling with fear at the sound of the lash.

Now, no man likes to see his horse beaten by anybody else, however deserving of it he may be; so Jim came promptly to his horse's rescue, and angrily demanded an explanation. This was given, but not in a way to appease him, for it was accompanied by a threat — in not by any means the politest language, either — to give the horse something very hot and dreadful at some future time, "if he did n't look out."

High words followed; then threats of retaliation, de-

fiances, challenges, and all the other signs of a very fierce quarrel, but, as in the other case, no blows.

"Ef I 'd on'y a-knowd what the darned brute was, he never would a' got inter this here barn," Caleb said, as he rubbed the wounded hip with the palm of his hand.

"Why," Jim retorted, "you knowed well enough the horse kicks! Why did n't yer keep away frum him?"

"Keep away frum him! Kin I allers be a-thinkin' of thy darned horse's heels whenever I come inter the stable, I 'd like ter know?"

"The horse haint never kicked me ne'er a oncst, and I 've hed him nigh upon two year," said Jim, who still stood stoutly up for his little nag.

"Well, on'y let him kick me agin, that 's all."

And with this final challenge Caleb hobbled off to his breakfast, suffering considerably both in his hip and his temper, and no doubt reproaching himself for ever bringing so troublesome a character as Jim Jimison on the place.

This unfortunate kick did not improve the relations between the two men at all; whilst, as regards my master himself, not only his locomotion but his general usefulness was affected by it for some weeks afterwards.

CHAPTER XI.

MY SUCCESSOR AND I.

AGAIN, in the course of the season's revolutions, October had come, with its lovely weather, its revivifying breezes, its autumn fruits, and its mild dissipations — corn-husking frolics, cider-making, and apple-paring — a very thin, but acceptable, sugar-coating to the bitter pills of rough daily toil, and sometimes rough usage, of the place.

And by this time I had also got well into the second year of my apprenticeship, to the close of which I began to look forward with mingled feelings of satisfaction and regret. Satisfaction in the anticipation of an easier and brighter future, and regret at the thought of leaving behind the few things that somehow had endeared themselves to me. Even Robinson Crusoe, after being restored to the society he loved so dearly, and from which he was so long separated, turned with many a longing look and aching heart (if we are to believe his historian) towards his solitary and dreary island home in the far-off Southern Ocean; and I dare say it was with much the same feeling that I looked forward to the loss of scenes and things I had become attached to, even though replaced by others of more importance.

But there were still many months before me, a good deal more experience, and many hard knocks to encounter, before Caleb Thomas had done with me.

The abundant crop of apples this year afforded us a good supply of cider, plenty of fruit for drying for the year's pies, and also for making that popular Bucks

County delicacy — apple-butter; and a very useful and excellent condiment this apple-butter is. It is made in this way: The apples are pared, cored, and sliced, and then put into a copper kettle, over a good fire. Fresh, sweet cider is added from time to time, as required, and a moderate quantity of brown sugar to sweeten. The whole is boiled, and almost continually stirred for many hours, until it acquires the consistency of marmalade. Molasses is often used in the place of sugar, but, I believe, is no improvement, though cheaper. When sufficiently boiled, it is put into earthen pots, and kept for use the whole year round. In many houses it is a standing dish on the table morning, noon, and night. This apple-butter making kept us up all night, some of us taking our turns at stirring, whilst others prepared the apples and fed the kettle with them and the cider and molasses.

November following close on the heels of October, I soon found myself brought face to face again with a severe winter, and that, too, with no better preparations wherewith to meet its inclemencies, in the way of suitable clothing, than in the year previous; and as I made no complaint, and as none seemed to think it their business to provide me with any, there was no way but to grin and bear it as well as I could.

It was found necessary, now that Jim's services could no longer be depended on, to retain those of Johnny Wilson. But this was no relief to me, for we all of us had our own respective duties to look after. In one respect, Johnny had the advantage of me, for, being a hired man, he was not expected to labor before or after the regular hours of a day's work; whilst I was up all through the winter months long before daylight, and out of doors

hard at work when he and the others were still abed. And there is nothing in my experience as a farmer's boy that recalls such painful recollections as those terrible winter mornings at the wood-pile, with limbs pinched and half frozen, hands too numb to hold the axe, yet knowing the work must be done, or a severe account given for it. Tough and hard I must have become, or else my slender and half-clad frame could never have withstood those piercing night winds and beating snow-drifts that played about the place.

The heavy snow-falls had now put an end to all field labor, and poor Jim Jimison was obliged to abandon all work on his new house. He had raised his walls about six feet from the ground, after an immense amount of exertion, and from that time forth never another stone was added to it. There it stood when I left the country, and there, for aught I know, it stands to this day, neither a thing of beauty in itself, nor a joy to its owner, or anybody else.

But Jim was not a man to be upset by a trifle like this. He continued to live on our place all through the winter, and appeared as happy as though he was the sole owner of it, and we his tenants. Through the influence of their wives, I think it must have been, he and Caleb seemed to forget their old differences, and thenceforth lived on very fair terms again.

About the first of December Caleb gave us a sensation by bringing home with him from the city a new boy. Rachel told me in confidence, some weeks before, that he intended doing so as soon as he could find one to suit him. She said that, in view of my own time expiring in a few months, he had thought it prudent to get another in good time to take my place when I left. To this she

added some playful remarks about my forthcoming independence, being my own master, having the oft-promised freedom-suit, and having all the trades and professions in the world to choose from, for which she thought I should be well qualified by the liberal education I had received, and was receiving.

In this sort of palaver, and in little complimentary speeches, Rachel, when in a particularly good-natured mood, was an adept. Nobody more so.

Another, and perhaps a still better, reason my master had for getting a new boy at this time, was the strictly economical one that he could relieve me of the smaller duties of churning, feeding and watering the animals, and various other minor matters that interfered with the much more weighty one of threshing, of which there was now a great deal to be done, and in which I began to play an important part.

In any case, he once more loaded his wagon, and, taking with him a sister, started for the "Red Lion" yard. He was too close-mouthed himself ever to let one know what his intentions were, and it was only by the merest chance that I ever found out anything about his plans and purposes for the time to come. To those about him, except his wife, he was particularly uncommunicative, and even to her his words were few. Even in this matter of the new boy, which naturally interested me, he never once breathed a word to me. But on his return from the city, he brought with him the youthful successor who was to follow in my footsteps as general cow-boy, plough-boy, and boy-of-all-work.

This fortunate youth was Charles Donovan, aged fourteen, the son of Irish parents living in the city. Caleb had found him much in the same manner as he had got

me — by a casual meeting in the street. And by holding out to the father and mother the promises of a good home for their son — food, clothes, the advantage of six weeks' schooling every winter; a strict supervision of his morals, with special reference to lying, swearing, and stealing; a freedom-suit at the end of his time; and, finally, a triumphant and most feeling allusion to his boy, Henry Sellers, who was about to leave him under such happy circumstances — he persuaded them to let him have the lad on trial.

I cannot say positively, but I don't think I acted quite so much like a young savage as the boy Dick did on first seeing me, when Charley Donovan alighted for the first time on the soil of Faulkner Farm. I have an impression that I spoke to him and asked him how he did, and also that I was rather taken with his bright, honest face, and dark eyes, and curly black hair. He was shivering with cold when he landed from the wagon, and very tired, for, owing to the heavy roads, he and Caleb had walked up all the hills to relieve the tired horses a little on their long journey.

The new-comer was welcomed by Rachel with almost a mother's affection, for there was no one who could show more kindness in look, voice, and manner than could she when it suited her, — though in this, as in many other cases, it was real, and not feigned.

Charley, on the other hand, was delighted with the kind reception he met with, and thought himself happy in having fallen in with such nice folks as these. He knew even less of the world than I did, and was quite as ready to believe that every glittering thing he saw in it was pure gold, until he found it otherwise.

"Henry," Rachel said, after tea and all the day's work

was over, "thee must git up some nuts and apples for Charles, and set yourselves down there by the fire and try and be friendly together. Come, thee ain't half awake; I 'm ashamed of thee! Thee must try and make him feel at home; thee 's the oldest, thee knows." Then turning to Charley, she asked, "Has thee any brothers and sisters, my boy?"

"Yes, ma'am; two brothers and two sisters."

"Are they older or younger than thee?"

"They 're all older nor me, ma'am."

"They must come out here and see thee sometimes, when the weather gits warm agin. Caleb will bring them with him when he goes to town, won't thee, Caleb?"

"Yes; I reckon they shall come along a-me some time or another, ef he 's a good boy, and we git on well together," he replied, with some little hesitation in his manner, and with a prudent reservation, seeing that his wife had gone a step too far in her promises. "I guess," he continued, addressing no one in particular, "they 'd better not stay up too late to-night. Charley 's tired, I know, and I want Henry to git through his work early to-morrow morning, and take that there bar'l of mackerel and them other things over to Uncle Enas's that I brought home for him. He 'd better take his sled; it will run better than the cart."

"Thee 'd better let Charley go with Henry, had n't thee, Caley? Thee 'd like to go, would n't thee, Charles?" Rachel said.

"Yes, ma'am."

"Very well; he can go along if he likes. He 'd better git up when Henry does, so as he can show him how to feed the hogs and milk the cows."

Caleb believed in beginning with a boy as you intend

to end with him, and no nonsense about it either; so that, if the boy chose to deceive himself with false notions of indulgence and comfort, it was not his fault.

Rachel pursued a different course. Her plan was to win his affection by kindness, and, when kindness failed to get the most out of him, then to use other means.

About Caleb there was no deception whatever; but I fear as much could not be said for his wife, for I found on more than one occasion, when she told me, with a look of sorrow and disappointment, that she had begged him to let me do something she knew would be agreeable to me — going to meeting, or accompanying her in the "cheer" to visit a friend — but that he could not spare me, it was herself that opposed it, and not he at all.

The husband and wife, with their infant son, soon retired to rest, leaving Charley and me in full possession of the chimney-corner, where we were joined by Johnny Wilson shortly afterwards.

Apples, hickory-nuts, and sweet cider, together with a good deal of small talk, not worth recording, helped to pass away a pleasant hour or two before bed-time, and to place us at once on a friendly footing.

A most sensible and intelligent little fellow was Charley Donovan, and he took to his new duties with a kindliness and zeal that was worthy of all praise. We arose together in the morning regularly at five, and at daybreak I went to the wood-pile, while he began the milking.

Charley's experience of the rougher side of farming life broke upon him more gradually than in my case, for, coming at a season when the labors of the farm did not call for that breathless energy that belongs to seed-time and harvest, his duties were comparatively light and easy at the start. But whatever he was set to do, in-doors or

out, he did without grumbling, whether it was rocking the baby for Rachel, fetching and carrying, and churning for her, or the harder and rougher drudgery of the barn and field later on.

Nor did he complain of the domestic economy of the house, but, with my example before him, swallowed his coffee without sweetening, his tea without milk, his bread without butter, and his salt pork without any lean.

If little Joshua has seldom been mentioned by me since his birth, nearly a twelvemonth before this period, it is simply because I have had nothing to say about him. But if I have neglected him, his parents never did. Both father and mother showered their affections upon him without stint, and whoever else might be overlooked or put about, Joshua never was for a moment.

The first-born of the Thomases, also a boy, had died at the exact age that this one now was, and the loss occasioned them very great grief. The fear of a similar calamity with their second child, I believe, was never absent from their minds, so that every possible care and indulgence that could be given, and every precaution against illness or harm of any kind they could think of, the little fellow had the benefit of.

During the whole of the winter he was never once taken outside the door, nor, indeed, allowed to leave the comfortable sitting-room, or parlor, which was kept well warmed by an old-fashioned wood-burning stove all the season through. It is hardly necessary for me to add that Joshua was a spoiled child.

About this time he became particularly troublesome, through the combined effects of cutting teeth, being weaned, and trying to learn the art of walking. To Charley and me he proved an unmitigated little nuisance,

and we could not help wishing him further. Not a minute had either of us to spare from our ordinary occupations, but what we were called on either to rock his cradle, amuse him with toys and teething-rings, or put him through his goose-steps. And woe betide us if anything happened to him, or he screamed with unusual violence, when we had the care of him. One of those times I was doing my best to amuse him on the carpet. He was creeping about on all-fours, and suddenly pitched forward on his little nose. He at once threw his whole soul into the matter, and shrieked his loudest and prettiest. Rachel, who happened to be in the cellar, busily skimming the milk for churning, at once rushed up-stairs, frantic with excitement and rage.

"Now, Henry, what *has* thee been doin' to Joshu-a?"

"Nothing at all! I was playing with him, and he—he—" I tried to explain, as much excited as she was herself.

"Don't thee tell me! don't thee tell me, thee good-for-nothing, rotten fellow! Thee done it a-purpose, I know thee did!"

Then snatching the child to her arms, who at once took a fresh start in kicking and screaming, she began a mixed and incoherent jangle between me and him:

"There, there; there then, there then! Thee ought to be ashamed of theeself, so thee ought. Let mammy see his dear 'ittle nose. If Caleb was here, I'd make him switch thee, so I would. Here, then; mammy 'll give him his candy. What has thee done with that stick of candy I left here?"

"I don't know. I've not seen any candy," I answered.

"Go about thee business, and don't let me see thee agin."

Nothing could have been more to my taste than this

command, for had I to choose between feeding hogs and playing with Joshua, the hogs at any time would have had the preference.

In proportion as the child got more restless and troublesome, the concern of the parents about him increased. To avoid sudden changes of air, in carrying him up and down stairs, it was decided to make the sitting-room their bed-room as long as the winter lasted, and for that purpose their bedstead was brought down and placed in one corner of it. Thus the room became not only a nursery and a best bed-room, but in the evenings, up to bed-time, which was generally about eight o'clock, a place of gathering for all the family. The plan, besides others already mentioned, had this advantage — Charley and I were always at hand during those hours to take our turns at rocking the cradle and keeping the baby quiet. This was not a serious matter at first, but, unfortunately for us, it was pretty well known that we both had the gift of singing, and we are all aware that when nothing else will pacify a baby — even a Quaker baby — anything at all passable in the way of a song will set it to rights.

Rachel did not know a word of any song herself, and when she attempted to lull the child to sleep with her voice, she moaned like a woman with a bad tooth-ache; though even that did tolerably well until he heard Charley and me, and then he was spoiled.

As to Caleb, though I have heard him, when in unusually high spirits, and all alone in the barn, trying to worry through a few lines of some song or another, he was sensible enough not to distress his family by singing in-doors. Johnny could sing, too, if he liked, but he was not often in the room with us, for he preferred to spend his evenings elsewhere.

Having once heard our voices, Joshua refused to be comforted without them; so that, from falling off to sleep at first on a song or two, and giving us a chance to nap a little by his cradle, after our day's work, he would wake up after the shortest pause in our voices, and fidget again until we began another song. At first this sort of thing lasted only until eight or nine o'clock, when we were permitted to go to bed; then ten o'clock, by which time Caleb and Rachel were comfortably resting or asleep on the top of their bed; then it got to be eleven and oftentimes twelve o'clock before Joshua was far enough gone in sleep to allow us to go and take our well-earned repose.

And all this was done under the convenient delusion that Charley and I were taking refreshing naps in turn, whilst the other rocked the cradle and kept the fire burning in the stove.

One evening, about nine o'clock, the child, after a long and peaceful slumber which promised to last all night, suddenly awoke, and, hearing nothing but a chorus of heavy snoring in the room, started his little pipe again, and at once roused the whole company. His father and mother were sound asleep on the bed; I was stretched out at full length on one side of the stove, and Johnny Wilson on the other; whilst Charley was in his place at the cradle, with one foot on a rocker, ready for action, and his sleepy head hanging over the back of his chair.

As the baby continued to cry Charley rocked the cradle, but never opened his mouth to speak or sing.

"Charley, try and sing that pretty song of thine; he will soon go to sleep again if thee does," Rachel said, in a persuasive undertone to the weary boy.

For the second or third time that evening Charley, more asleep than awake, began his favorite and almost

interminable song, which never failed to restore quiet to the baby. This wonderful song — the title of which I now forget — was all about one "Young Edwin," and was of a highly pathetic and sentimental character. Each of the many verses ended with

> "And then away, without delay, to Edinborough town."

But what young Edwin's business was in Edinborough town, or why he was in such haste to get there, I am unable to say at this time; at all events, the song was mighty popular with us all, from Joshua up to Caleb.

After Charley had finished his song, and the baby showed signs of renewed restlessness, Johnny, who had never tried his hand at parlor music before, was called on for something.

"John, come now, why can't thee try and sing a little? I know thee can if thee likes," Rachel said to him, in a coaxing sort of way.

Johnny was rather proud of his musical powers, and seemed not displeased at this invitation to sing. Nay, I think he felt a little slighted at not having been asked before. So after a little proper hesitation and make-believe reluctance, he broke out, in a voice quite unearthly for its hollowness and resonance:

> "Oh, the day is a-breaking, I say,
> The day is a-breaking, I say,
> For them that's in bed, when they ought to be up,
> It's high time to be jogging away."

So far from quieting the child, this first verse of John's song only increased its agitation. Seeing which, Rachel again appealed to the singer, in a tone half in sorrow and half in anger:

"Oh, there, there, John; if thee can't sing nothing better than that, thee'd better stop! Don't thee know nothing else?"

Nothing daunted, Johnny took a fresh start, going this time from one extreme of gloominess to another of frivolity and gayety:

"Oh, de monkey married de baboon's sister,
Smacked his lips and den he kissed her,
Kissed so hard he raised a blister;
Now was n't dat a shame?"

"There, John, there; that will do, if thee don't know nothing else," cried Rachel, before Johnny had begun his second verse, to which Caleb added, in his usual aggrieved tone, when anything displeased him:

"If that there's the best thee can do, I reckon thee'd better go to bed, John."

Whether it was that Joshua had any real partiality for sentimental songs over other kinds, or whether it was our voices he had got used to, I don't quite know; but I am quite sure nobody's singing pleased or satisfied him like mine and Charley's. So it was a disappointment to us when Johnny so signally failed in his first attempt, for his assistance would have been of value to us both. After so sharp a rebuff, John quietly slunk up-stairs, with his sepulchral voice, to his bed, and left the stage to us.

It was now my turn, and I replaced Charley at the cradle, opening my part with the favorite:

"When a boy, Harry Bluff left his friends and his home,
And his dear native land, the wide ocean to roam;
Like a sapling he sprung — he was fair to the view,
And as hardy as oak, boys, the older he grew."

And so on to the end, by which time the room was restored to quietness and peace.

But the song that, like Charley's "Young Edwin," never failed to stop the mouth and dry up the tears of the sensitive youngster, and even to soothe his mother and father, like drops of chloroform, was my

ANGEL'S WHISPER.

"A baby was sleeping, its mother was weeping,
Her husband was far on the wild, raging sea;
The tempest was swelling round the fisherman's dwelling,
And she cried, Dermot, darling, oh, come back to me."

Whatever else I might sing, this was always called for, and I was lucky if a repetition was not once or twice demanded, as much, I believe, for the satisfaction of the parents as the pacification of the baby.

CHAPTER XII.

A LITTLE SUNSHINE, FOLLOWED BY A BIG CLOUD.

ON a Sunday afternoon, late in December, Charley and I were sitting alone, on opposite sides of the great kitchen fire-place, and between us blazed and crackled the logs of wood, which threw a cheerful light and warmth on all around. Caleb was away on a visit to a neighbor, and Rachel was indulging in the very unusual luxury, for her, of an afternoon nap, with Joshua, on the bed in the next room. We were eating hickory-nuts, which were cracked with a hammer on the edge of a flat-iron placed between our knees. Among the other things

talked about by us was that of going to school, to which I was then looking forward in the next month.

As Charley was then only on probation, there was nothing definite fixed as regarded his schooling. He, nevertheless, had a very natural curiosity to know something about an institution which he hoped one day to become a member of; and I, not unwilling to enlighten him on the subject, entered into full particulars as to the mistress, her scholars and their studies, and what my own experience had been there, including, of course, the fight with the young Dutchman, and its results, all of which interested him very much.

The barking of the dog told us a stranger was approaching the house, which was soon confirmed by the sound of a pair of light feet at the door stamping the snow off before entering. Then who should come in but Carrie Smiley. There was nothing very wonderful in this, it is true, for these friendly visits among neighbors were common enough, and Carrie had been to our house more than once before; but, taken in connection with our conversation about the school and its scholars, among whom her name was mentioned, it seemed to me very like a coincidence.

"How do you do, Carrie?" I said, as I rose to greet her.

"How does thee do? Is Rachel in?"

"Yes, she is; but she 's asleep just now in the other room."

"And Caleb, where is he?"

"He is out somewhere; I don't know exactly where. If you 'll take a seat for awhile, I 've no doubt Rachel will soon be awake."

"Thank thee; I 'll wait a few minutes."

Then, as if half in doubt whether she ought to do it, she sat herself timidly down on the extreme edge of the chair, casting a glance at the strange boy in the chimney-corner as she did so.

Though I resumed my seat and took up my hammer again, the nut-cracking hung fire, and but little was done by either Charley or me in the presence of our fair visitor.

"Carrie, would you like some nuts?" I asked.

"No, thank thee."

"Will you take one of these apples?"

She took an apple, and then squared herself on her chair and began to feel a little easier.

"Do you go to school now?" I asked.

"Oh, yes; I began two months ago, and intend to go all winter. Is thee coming this winter?"

"Yes; I expect to begin early next month."

"Well, I hope when thee does come thee 'll behave theeself, and not do as thee did last winter."

"Last winter! Oh! I see what you mean; the fight I had with that Kauffman!"

"Yes; that 's just what I do mean. We never had anything of that kind before until thee came to school."

"Well, I could n't help it; he drove me into it."

"Then thee should have kept away from him. Evil communications corrupt good manners."

"Well, I can't help it if they do," I answered, not happening to think of anything better to say.

Then after a short pause, during which she took off her little silk hood and swung it by its strings round her fore-finger, she went on:

"I suppose thee 's going to show us all how to read when thee does come!"

I am not sure whether she meant this as a bit of satire,

or whether she was only poking a little quiet fun at me; probably both.

"No; I don't go to school to teach; I go to learn," I answered.

"Thee thinks theeself the best reader in the school, I know thee does."

This was said with so much warmth, that I began to think she had walked all the way from home expressly to unburden her mind of it, and throw it in my teeth! So, taking it as a sort of challenge, I said:

"No; I don't think that; but I know I can read *as well* as any one there."

"Self-praise is no recommendation!" she replied, for the second time quoting from her copy-book, and determined to show me no quarter.

"I did n't praise myself."

"Thee did; thee knows thee did. Did n't he?"

This last appeal was addressed to Charley, who, catching her gaze, at once dropped his curly head, blushed, and said he did n't know. Then, attempting to crack a nut, he cracked his knuckles instead. It was not difficult to see what was going on in that boy's bosom! Before Carrie came along he had a heart there as sound as any nut he was cracking, but before she was there fifteen minutes it was not worth two cents! He only needed six weeks at the same school to make him as great a goose about her as the rest of them.

"Have you had any skating or sliding around your way yet this winter, Carrie?"

"No; we have no ice on our place; but if we had, I should n't skate. Does thee skate?"

"Yes; but I left my skates in town, with my sled and other things. I 've been sliding, though, on our creek,

below here. There 's splendid ice there. Would th—would you like to go and have a slide?"

"Well, just for a minute; it 's so long since I 've had a slide; though perhaps Rachel 's awake now!"

"Oh, no, she 's not. I know by Joshua's bein' so quiet."

The creek was about two hundred yards from the house, and the ice was in fine condition for either skating or sliding. Carrie and I were soon on it, and Charley was not long in following us, not only leaving his nuts, which he was particularly fond of, but caring nothing for what might happen in the event of Joshua's waking! Besides, we had both of us been on the ice before that day, and he could not want to slide again; that I am certain of. No other part of the ice would suit him but just where Carrie and I were sliding, either!

It invariably happens in such cases that one slider at least must needs go down, and oftentimes the whole string will get piled in a promiscuous heap one on top of the other, as everybody knows. In this one it was Carrie's misfortune to slip, probably for want of practice. Being near by, I at once went to her relief, and, taking her by the hand, I helped her up on her feet again.

"Is th—are you hurt, Carrie?" I asked.

"Oh, no; I 'm not hurt."

And away she went again, and I felt just mean enough to wish she would go down once more! But she did n't, and so all three soon returned to the house in excellent spirits, and one, at least, all the happier for this little episode of Carrie Smiley's unlooked-for visit.

I was quite willing to forgive her, not only for her poor and outspoken opinion of my scholarship, but also the sharp rebuke she gave my supposed vanity, as well as the

wicked practice of fighting, which I had introduced to the school.

I confess, also, I was foolish enough to feel a secret pleasure in knowing that in a very few days, perhaps the next week, I should be not only seeing her daily, but sometimes stand by her side in the same class.

As to Charley Donovan, I really believe that the doubts he was already beginning to feel about staying his time out with Caleb Thomas were promptly removed by the events of that afternoon, and that he then and there decided to profit by the educational advantages of Aunt Mary's school, and all the other benefits of such an apprenticeship as Caleb offered him. I think I never heard him in better voice than when, in that same evening, he broke forth in his favorite song of "Young Edwin." I know very well he envied me my privilege of going to school that winter; whilst he, unless he decided very soon to remain the two years, might not go at all. But it was so ordered, and I could not help it.

A few days after Carrie's visit, and the very day before that fixed for my second term at Aunt Mary's academy, a circumstance occurred that not only changed my plans, but, for a time, threw a dark shadow over me, too.

It was an exceedingly dismal afternoon. The air was murky rather than cold, and filled with large flakes of moist snow, which fell on ground already covered with the now melting snow of former storms. I, and no doubt the others also, was looking forward to the completion of my day's work for the comforts of the fireside and escape from the storm. Anything in-doors — even rocking the cradle and singing to the baby — was preferable to being outside in such weather as this. An hour or two more and it would be dark.

A two-horse, covered market-wagon was seen slowly approaching our place from the direction of the village. The jaded horses had, it was easy to be seen, as much as they could well do to draw their heavy load, rendered still more heavy by the thick coating of snow on the wagon's top, over the wretched road. When opposite our house, the wagon stopped, and then its owner came forward, and, in the Dutch-English of the country, asked for the master of the place. Caleb came forward, and shook hands with the stranger.

The story was soon told. The man, a Dutchman, was returning from the city to his home, about a dozen miles further up the country, in Lehigh County. His wagon was loaded with goods for a storekeeper in his neighborhood. He had, with great difficulty, and after a long and tedious journey, got thus far on his homeward way; but the exhausted state of his animals, and the ascent of the hills ("Blue Mountains") in front of him, made him anxious, in the then condition of the roads and the weather, about his safety.

If only he could get to the top of the "mountains," he would be all right, for the remaining five or six miles would be an easy matter enough.

"Could Mishter Thomas help him?" That was the question. He was willing to pay a fair price for the assistance, and would be very grateful, too.

The man's appeal, backed as it was by a substantial offer of money, together with the mute entreaty of the suffering brutes that stood steaming in the roadway, quickly decided the matter. The two men then walked out to the wagon, ostensibly to see it and its contents, but really to settle the question of payment away from our hearing.

But who was to go with the man? It did n't take long to decide that, either. Caleb himself would not go so long as he had any one else to send. Johnny Wilson was working by the day, and could not be asked to go, without additional pay, even if he would go at all. Charley could not be trusted with the oxen; and to ask Jim Jimison, whose business it was to attend to matters of this sort, would be to hand over the Dutchman's dollars to him, which was not likely. So, as I expected, it fell to my lot to go with the man.

"Henry, I reckon he 'd better take his steers and help this here man up the Blue Ridge; had n't he?" my master said, as he came back to the barn, where the three of us were busy at work.

As he had already decided to send me, this way of putting the thing, as though he left it to me what to do, was only intended to soften down what he knew very well was a hard and disagreeable task. But there was no help for it, for go I must; and I knew well enough that, short as was the distance, — some five or six miles each way, — I should be out nearly all night. Oxen travel slowly at the best of times, and on roads covered with slushy snow particularly so; and when to that is added the ascent of steep hills, it becomes simply a matter of creeping along at a snail's pace.

"Thee 'd better go to the house and git theeself sumthin' to eat before thee goes. I 'll yoke the steers, and have 'em ready agin thee comes back."

I went to the house as directed, and having eaten part of an apple-pie, returned, and found all ready for a start. The steers were made fast by a chain to the end of the wagon's pole in front of the horses; and, whilst the owner of the wagon made himself comfortable inside of

it, I trudged along in front, guiding and urging forward my cattle. The dog, who never forsook the oxen for anything else, followed, sometimes by my side, sometimes under the wagon, and at others making raids in the woods whenever we passed any.

Darkness soon overtook us, and the snow, which continued to fall heavily, not only penetrated through my thin clothes to the skin, but increased the darkness and gloominess of the night immeasurably. On we plodded, hour after hour, passing here and there a farm-house, whose dim light, shining through its window, was one of the few signs of life there were to cheer the way and to keep one's spirits up. Two or three times the distant jingling of bells announced the approach of a sleigh, which lent a momentary cheerfulness to the scene. Then, when we met, or it passed ahead of us, there was a little shouting in Dutch or English between the two parties, either by way of warning or in friendly greeting, after which the sleigh at once disappeared in the darkness, and the sound of its bells gradually died away in the distance.

Between the man in the wagon and myself but few words passed, for, besides having nothing to talk about, neither of us felt much in the humor for talking. Now and then he would bawl out something about the road, — some caution or advice I did not need, — and then all was quiet again.

At last there were signs that the latter, though harder, part of the journey was soon to begin. The road grew more and more sloping, and the draught on the animals increased. Soon the woods began to thicken about us, and then we found ourselves in a village at the foot of the hills. Here we drew up in front of an inn, and watered and fed our cattle before beginning the ascent.

This done, the next thought was to rest and refresh ourselves.

"Now I guess we go inside and git sumsing to eat. Ain't yer hungry, heh?" the good-natured Dutchman said, in a tone of surprising briskness and spirit, as he sprang into his wagon and hauled forth his wallet.

Whether it was the cheery influence of the neat little inn, with its blazing wood-fire on the hearth of its light and comfortable bar-room, or the prospect of so soon being over the worst of his journey, I don't know; but he seemed suddenly to thaw, and, from one of the dullest and heaviest of Dutchmen, became one of the gayest and liveliest. He shook hands in a hearty way with the landlord (himself a Dutchman); slapped him familiarly on the back; ordered coffee for two; danced a short but brilliant break-down in the middle of the room; and then struck up a long and animated conversation in low-Dutch with mine host and the few villagers who loitered about the house.

As I was unable to understand a word of this jabber, I was quite contented to sit quietly by the fire and dry myself, drink my coffee, and eat my supper of bread and cold sausage from my friend's wallet.

The loud and rapid clatter of these men in a foreign tongue; their rough, burly manners, so different from the Quakers a few miles below; their fondness for pipes and cigars, which filled the room with tobacco-fumes, made it difficult to believe that one was in the same county — less than fifty miles from the city of Philadelphia — and not in some foreign land! It was still more hard to understand why people born in the same county, and living together in close neighborhood, having public and private interests in common, more or less, like the

Dutch and Quakers, should continue, generation after generation, to show such marked differences of character, language, and habits.

Both classes were equally patriotic and proud of their native State. They met together at elections, at the markets and other public places, and always on friendly terms, but still the Dutch remained Dutch and the Quakers Quakers. One difference was, that whilst nearly all the Dutch citizens spoke English — with a strong foreign accent, it is true — very few, if any, of the Quakers spoke Dutch.

I cannot say I was one wit the wiser for all I heard during the hour I sat listening to their noisy talk. Nevertheless, I should have been very glad to remain there all night, for that matter, rather than go forth again to battle with the elements and spend the night on that dreary road.

After the usual shaking of hands and bidding each other "Gut-nacht, Gut-nacht," my friend lighted a cigar, and then, turning to me, said:

"Now den; I guess we go ahet agin. Haf yer eat blenty, Vos?"

I assured him I was quite ready, and had satisfied my appetite too.

I made free at the same time to rob his wallet of a good chunk of bread and sausage for the benefit of my dog, who was patiently watching his companions, the oxen, outside, and who would otherwise have got nothing to eat until next morning.

When we left, the good people of the drowsy little village were retiring for the night, and one by one the lights went out. Once or twice I fancied I saw a face appear

at the bed-room window, as if to take a last look at the weather before going to rest.

Soon the village and its comfortable little hostelry were left behind us, and then began the serious work of the night. The road became steeper and rougher, whilst the thick woods on either side gave greater density to the night's darkness.

The Dutchman walked by the side of his horses, cigar in mouth, now encouraging them by kindly words, now slapping one or the other under the belly with the palm of his big hand, and all the time keeping up a running chatter in Dutch and English.

From driving his own horses he began to use his lash occasionally on my oxen. This I would not stand.

"Don't do that! don't do that!" I cried. "They're doin' their best, and I know just what they can do."

"Why, dat off steer ain't doin' no good. Look at him!"

"Yes he is; he's pullin' his best. I'll look after him; don't you fear."

Another attempt to spare his own horses at the expense of my cattle, led to a sharp altercation, after which he left my part of the business to me, without further interference.

It was a tremendous drag up those hills, and a halt at every few yards of the way was found necessary to rest the struggling animals. By the time the summit was reached, they were as near utter exhaustion as they well could be. Neither horses nor oxen could have stood it much longer; and right glad was I when, about midnight, I turned my face towards home.

There was no place near at hand to feed the animals, even if we were so disposed; so the farmer dragged a small

bunch of hay out of his wagon-bottom, and gave me part of it to feed with as I went along. Then he lit his cigar, shook hands with me, thanked me, said "Good-night" and "Good luck," started his team down the western declivity of the hills, whilst I retraced my steps towards the eastern.

Dark and deserted as was the road, and stormy the night (for the snow had never ceased to fall), I felt an inexpressible relief in being left to myself again, with no bothering Dutchman to annoy me or to persecute my oxen.

The homeward journey was made without a stoppage, and, of course, in a comparatively short space of time. The village I left a few hours before was now as silent and lifeless as the forest I had just passed through. The little inn, even, had long before closed its hospitable doors, and the only sign of life about it was the flickering of the light from its still burning wood-fire, seen through its bar-room window.

The only living thing I met on the road was a large watch-dog, which came out from a barn on the outskirts of the village, and, barking furiously, seemed more than half disposed to dispute our right of way. An attack on my dog followed; then a fierce, but short, fight, a roll in the snow, and all was silent again. Thenceforth I pursued my sloppy way unchallenged and unmolested.

When I reached home, I was soaked through to the skin again. My shoes were filled with the wet snow, and I went to bed chilly, stiff, and altogether uncomfortable.

CHAPTER XIII

UNDER A CLOUD.

NOT a word was said at the breakfast-table in the morning about my not appearing there, for it was known that I had not been in many hours, and that I required rest and sleep. So the very unusual indulgence was allowed me of remaining in bed at my own pleasure.

An hour or two after breakfast-time, I arose and attempted to dress. Then it was I discovered, what I had already suspected, that the cold had struck into my bones. My legs were stiff and swollen, and every attempt I made to move them was followed by a pang.

After a long struggle, I succeeded in reaching the room below, when, in an effort to walk from the door to the fire-place, I fell at full length on the floor.

Rachel, who was in the next room, upon hearing the noise of my fall, instantly rushed in, and helped to raise me to a seat.

"Why, Henry, what is the matter with thee? Tell me what is the matter!" she anxiously demanded.

"I don't know. I am stiff and in pain all over, and can't walk."

"Why did n't thee stay up-stairs, and knock for somebody to come to thee? Shall I git thee some breakfast? What would thee like? Thee 'll feel better bime-by, after thee has had something to eat and rested awhile. I 'll bring thee a cup of coffee and some eggs."

The breakfast was soon got ready; but had it been the rarest delicacy the world could produce, I could not have

touched it. My appetite had gone as completely as my strength.

"Is there anything thee would like, my boy?"

"No, nothing at all; only to lie down."

"Very well. I'll bring in the settee, so thee can lay on that. No; thee shall go and lay on it there. Thee'll be more comfortable in that room; won't thee?"

An attempt to reach the other room, even with Rachel's aid, proved a failure. My knees gave way under me, and I sank back on my chair helpless again. At this Rachel became greatly alarmed; so taking down the long tin dinner-horn, she went to the door and blew a blast, which soon brought both Caleb and Charley from the barn.

"Here, Caley, thee and Charley take Henry in the next room. Be careful; he is very sick."

I am bound to say that Caleb showed a good deal of concern about me, and both he and Charley handled me with all due tenderness.

No explanation of my illness was really necessary, for both Caleb and his wife knew full well that it was due to my exposure to the terrible weather of the night before, with no clothing on me that was at all suited to meet it. But it would not do to acknowledge this; so, with an affected surprise, he said:

"Why, Henry, what's the matter with him? He didn't git on a frolic with that there man last night, did he?"

Receiving no answer from me (for I was in too much pain to talk), he added, playfully:

"I knowed he was makin' a night of it; but I didn't think he was a-comin' home in sich a state as this, or elst I would a-sent Charley here to look after him." Then turning towards the door, he said with a yawn, and in a

tone that was intended for great indulgence: "Well, I reckon we'll have to do without him to-day. I expect he's ketched a little cold; but he'll be as well as ever agin to-morrer, if he rests and takes care of hisself."

With this consoling opinion, he and the lad returned again to their work of winnowing wheat in the barn, leaving me to the care of Rachel, who, it must be owned, was all kindness and sympathy. She talked to me much more than was agreeable, I confess. She told me long stories of cases supposed to be similar to my own among her friends, of sudden attacks of sickness, and equally sudden recovery, and so forth. She pressed me to eat and to drink, and brought me tea, cakes, and preserves; brought up everything she thought would be agreeable and cheering to me in the way of conversation — such as going to school again, my coming freedom, and even favored me with confidential particulars of their own future plans and intentions; but never a word was said about the circumstances that brought on my illness.

When evening came, I found that all the symptoms of my malady had increased. I was in greater pain than in the morning. When it was found I could not be removed up-stairs, it was decided to carry me bodily, as I lay on the sofa, into the kitchen, thus leaving Caleb, Rachel, and Joshua undisturbed in their possession of the room until the morning, when I was taken back again.

This operation was repeated next day, for, so far from being as well as ever again in a few hours, as so confidently predicted, I grew worse day by day, until my limbs became thoroughly rigid, my joints swollen and distorted, and the slightest movement of my body was a torture.

Jim Jimison's wife came in often to see me, and in her simple, good-natured Dutch way to cheer and comfort

me. If she could do but little, the sight of her fat, smiling face was always a pleasure to me. Jim himself dropped in too sometimes, and would come up to me and say, in his rough, jerky voice:

"Well, Harry, how are you to-day? Jule says it's rheumatism you've got. I know what that is well enough. You'll soon be all right agin. You're worth a dozen dead men yet."

Then, as they were all at supper in the kitchen, Jim put his head in at the door, and I heard him say:

"Cale, if thee wants any leeches for that boy of thine, just say the word, and I'll fetch 'em along."

One day sister Martha came to see Rachel and the beloved Joshua, of whom she was as dotingly fond as was his own mother.

Turning to me with a grin, after she had snatched up the child and saluted it with a score of kisses, she said:

"Well, Henry, how is thee? Rachel says thee's sick. I guess there ain't much the matter with thee, is there?"

Then, without waiting for an answer, she planted a duplicate score of kisses on Joshua's mouth, told him he was aunty's own boy, that he was the sweetest, the darlingest, the best, and prettiest child the world had ever yet seen, with a good deal more of the same sort of innocent blarney, without taking any more notice of me than if I had not been in the house.

That evening, in order, I suppose, to make room for the visitor, I was carried to the kitchen earlier than usual, and left with Charley and John, — a pleasant change, if anything could be pleasant, suffering as I then was.

"What do you think Martha said to-day about you?" Charley asked, as he was sitting by my side near the chimney.

"I don't know. What did she say? She's mean enough to say anything but her prayers."

"She told Rachel there was nothing the matter with you. That it was only *growin' pains* you had. That you could get up well enough, if you liked, and if she had anything to do with it, she'd make you get up."

I don't know whether John Wilson or I felt the more indignant on hearing this.

John paused in his nut-cracking, frowned savagely first at Charley and then at me, and then, as if unable to restrain his anger, he got up, paced the floor, and looked as though he only asked one favor, and that was to get somebody by the throat!

"Dat's wot yer call a white woman, is it? Dem's Quakers, is dey? Dat's de sort of way dey treats sick folks in dese parts, hey?" Then, his voice rising with his choler, he said: "I swar I would n't trust a dog of mine wid sich —— broots; dat's wot I would n't."

"Hush, Johnny — hush, hush! They'll hear you in there, if you ain't careful."

"Let 'em h'yar me; I don't keer. I'll smash de whole lot of 'em if dey kum a-foolen' round me."

"Yes; but you'll be gettin' Charley into a scrape if they hear you."

Upon which he quieted down a little and resumed his seat in the chimney-corner, his face still quivering with excitement.

"I neber liked dat woman's look from de fust time I eber sot eyes onto her, and I hate to see her kum 'bout de place."

"No; no more do I like her; and I've seen a good deal more of her than you have, too."

"I s'pose she calls hersef a Quaker, don't she? and

fixes hersef up in one ob dem bonnets to go to meetin' on a Sunday?"

"I don't believe she 's any more of a Quaker than you are; she only shams the Quaker. The Quakers are very good folks, and I don't believe they 'd own her for one of them, anyhow."

"Yes; dat is so. I ain't got nuffin to say agin de Quakers. Dey 's de best frens de kulled folks has eber had. Ole Sam Wilson, my ole boss, use to say if it war n't fur de Quakers dere would n't be all dis yer muss 'bout de slabes. I 've knowed some mighty nice folks sence I kum to dis naborhood; dere 's no gitten' roun' dat; but yer can't git dis chile ter stop wid Cale Thomas much longer, any way you can fix it."

"Why, he 's all right enough to you, ain't he?"

"No, he ain't. He 's allers a-grumblen' 'bout sumthen or other; fust one thing, and den anudder. I know wot he 's a-smartin' fur, and he 'll git it too ef he don't look out."

"What 's that?"

"Wot 's dat? Why, a good licken'. I on'y wish he 'd try to sarve me as he hes you, dat 's all."

"What did Rachel say, Charley, when Martha said that about me?"

"She said she guessed you must be sick, for your appearance spoke for itself; that 's all."

"I wish she had this instead of me; then we 'd see how she 'd talk."

"Caleb 's been asken' me to-day about my staying the two year wid him; because if I do, he says I might as well be goin' to school now whilst you 're sick. You can go after I get through, he says."

"And what do you think about it?"

"Well, I guess I'll try it. I won't stand what you have, though, since you've been here."

"No; nor I would n't myself again. I see now what a fool I've been."

"I hope you ain't a-gwine to be fool enuf to bind yourself to dis yer man, is yer, Charley? Better go and hang yerself, and be done wid it. If I was Harry, you would n't ketch me a-stoppin' h'yar anudder day arter I was well. 'Taint no place fur him, anyhow."

Feeling unable to keep up the discussion any longer, I made no answer to Johnny's last remark.

The next morning, when Martha took her leave, she made a feeble attempt to be civil to me, and expressed a hope that I would soon be out again, which was no doubt sincere, seeing the burden I was just then to the family. But I neither answered her nor took any notice of her.

Another visitor that day was Miss Abigal Jamieson, sister to Jim, who, having heard through her brother of my illness, hurried over to see me, and, seeing me, to cure me. Abigal — or Abby, as she was called — was an unmarried lady of about five-and-thirty summers, and, as regards form, face, and manners, was an exact counterpart, in petticoats, of her brother Jim, but without Jim's roughness. Though excessively good-natured and kind, her incessant chatter, from the time she entered the room until she left again, was dreadfully wearying.

Almost every man and woman of average intelligence has a specific for the cure of rheumatism on the very shortest notice. Abby had hers, and she brought it along with her, too, so as to lose no time in setting me on my feet again. Her manner of speaking was in short, nervous sentences, and all her features seemed to act in concert with her tongue in its restlessness.

"Well, Henry," she began, "how does thee do? So thee 's got rheumatis', has thee? Is thee in much pain? Jim only told me about it last night. Thee 's been sick nearly a week, has n't thee? I 'm so mad Jim did n't tell me before. I could a-cured thee at once. Thee 's too young to have rheumatics. Thee should a-waited a few years. How did thee git them? I suppose thee took cold somewheres? I 've brought thee sumthin' that 'll soon set thee to rights. Thee need n't be afeared to take it, either. There 's gin and brimstone, and — No, I won't tell thee all, else thee 'll go and start as a doctor, and cure everybody. I cured Elias Bradshaw only last fall, after he 'd ben laid up a month. He could n't budge a peg when I fust see him. He screeched if you on'y looked at him. The jints of his fingers was as big as hickory-nuts. Now he could jump over that fence easy, though he 's old enough to be thy grandfather. Now, thee must take a dose of this every six hours. Does thee hear?"

And then, without knowing or caring to ask what other medicine I had taken, or treatment I might be following, she poured out half a teacupful of her precious antidote, and, holding it to my lips, said:

"There, now, drink that right off. Mind, thee must give me credit for curing thee, if I git thee better. I 'll come agin to-morrow to see how thee is, and if thee 's taken thee medicine proper. How does thee feel now?"

If I found myself no better at the end of the week, it was not for want of remedies, all warranted to cure at sight, which kindly-disposed neighbors brought in for my relief.

There was old Hannah Green, a sort of village oracle, who was supposed to know everything, and to be able to

cure almost anything. She did the cupping and leeching of the neighborhood, when the doctor was not called in. She was great in herb cures, also. She likewise acted as nurse and midwife when wanted. In fact, the old woman made herself useful in a variety of ways, and was a very handy sort of person to have around, if she was a little too free with her cups and leeches, and sometimes applied them at the wrong times and places. Her intentions were good and her charges low.

Hannah somehow scented out my case, and followed close on the track of Abigal. She came in the evening, fully prepared for any emergency. She understood at once what was the matter, and said so.

"It 's inflammatory rheumatism thee 's got; and thee 'll have to be very careful, or it may come to rheumatic fever, and that will be a bad lookout for thee."

Then she asked a number of questions, as to how long I had been ill, what I had taken for it, about my diet, habits, and what not.

Her first act was to forbid me the use of a drop more of Abigal's "rubbish," as she termed it, after putting the bottle to her nose.

Then she gave me a glassful of a decoction of herbs she brought with her, leaving the remainder for my use afterwards. Now came the grand professional stroke. The inflammation must be reduced. Nothing like a little blood-letting for this.

"The leeches! Why, where are my leeches? Now, I made sure I brought them with me. No; I declare I 've left them behind."

"No matter, Aunt Hannah, Jim Jimison will have some, I 've no doubt. Charley, thee run in and ask Jim

to bring some leeches with him in here. A dozen, Aunt Hannah says."

But Jim was away from home, and his wife knew nothing of them; so the leeches could not be applied that night, and Hannah promised to come with them the next day.

In nothing that was advised or proposed for me by anybody did Caleb or Rachel interfere or give an opinion about, for, having no knowledge of their own, they placed implicit faith in whoever else pretended to any. Thus, had Abigal drenched the life out of me with her physic, or Hannah drawn all the blood out of my body with her leeches and cups, never a doubt would have entered their minds about the wisdom of such a course. Hence, they acquiesced in everything that was offered for my benefit, thinking, probably, that among so many shots one would be sure to hit the bull's eye and make a cure.

But, happily for me, in the afternoon of the following day, before the women had time to tinker me any more with their nostrums, a real Samaritan came along.

This was Deborah Penrose, an elderly widow lady from the village. Deborah was just one of those women that a man would choose out of a crowd to nurse or to comfort him in sickness or affliction. Her handsome, motherly face pleased you at once, whilst her soft voice, sympathetic words, and gentle manners went right straight to your heart. She proved a "ministering angel" to me, as she had been to many others. She came, not to see me, but Rachel; and noticing my feverish face and swollen hands, her benevolent heart was stirred at once.

"Well, my boy, and what is the matter with thee?"

"I have rheumatism."

"Rheumatism! Oh, I am sorry for that. Is thee in much pain?"

"Yes; all over me. I can't move myself."

"How long has thee had it?"

"Just a week."

"And is any one attending thee?—I mean any doctor?"

"No. Hannah Green has been here, and is coming again to-day to bleed me."

"What is thy name?"

"Henry Sellers."

"And has thee a father and mother?"

"I have a mother in the city."

"Does she know how sick thee is?"

"No; I don't want her to know."

"Then thee would n't like me to write to her for thee?"

"No, thank you. I wrote her a few days ago, and had a letter from her this week."

"Does thee know what brought on this attack?"

"I think it must have been from being out all night in the storm last Fifth-day night."

"What was thee doing out all night?"

"Caleb sent me to help a man over the Blue Ridge with my steers."

"Thee seems very thinly clad! Is this thy usual clothing?"

"Yes."

I could distinctly see a cloud pass over her face as she turned to go to the kitchen where Rachel then was; and then with almost equal clearness I could hear her words through the doorway:

"Rachel, I fear that poor boy is very sick. Don't thee think Dr. Smiley ought to be sent for?"

"I was thinken' so myself, Aunt Deborah; and if he did n't git better after Hannah has been here to-day, I was goin' to ask Caleb to go and fetch him or Dr. Grimshaw to see Henry."

"If I were in thy place, Rachel, I would send at once. It looks to me like rheumatic fever, and, if so, it ought not to be neglected an hour."

Deborah was too important a person to be disregarded, especially when speaking with the decision she then did; so Rachel at once seized the dinner-horn, and, in her new-born zeal and alarm, sent forth a blast both long and loud, that not only made Caleb scratch gravel in his haste to answer it, but set the dog Paddy howling for mercy near by.

Caleb at once fell in with Deborah's wish, and, to show his desire to please her, went himself for Dr. Smiley.

Rachel had a strong prejudice against this gentleman, and would have preferred the new and younger doctor, Grimshaw, but in deference to Deborah assented to the older doctor coming. Her prejudice had its origin in her girlhood, when the "good-for-nothing, rotten fellow" charged her a quarter of a dollar for pulling a tooth — and that, too, when she went to his own house to have it done! She never heard Dr. Smiley's name mentioned without somehow bringing forward this damning charge against him. Besides, she liked Grimshaw on account of his rough and brusque manner, which she thought an indication of "smartness." He was consulted by Caleb for some disorder of the chest only a short time before this, and he at once ordered him to give up chewing tobacco as the first step, and this raised him at once in her estimation an hundred-fold!

On her return to the room, Deborah said:

"Caleb has gone for Dr. Smiley, Henry, and I have no doubt he will soon bring thee round. I can't stay longer to-day, but to-morrow I will come again to see thee. Is thee fond of reading? Very well, then; I will see if I can find a nice book for thee. Now, whatever thee does, don't get low-spirited. Thee'll soon be better. Farewell."

Deborah was soon followed by Abigal; but as the two women met on the road, and as one told the other what had been done about the doctor, Abby very prudently gave up the case and took the remains of her sovereign remedy home with her. Nevertheless, the good creature came often to see me, and brought with her consolation in the shape of dried fruits, preserves, and sugar-candy. Like her brother Jim and his little horse, when beaten in a square pull against another horse he never felt defeated, so with Abby — though obliged to "throw up the (medical) sponge" to Dr. Smiley, she was as proud of my recovery as though she alone had snatched me from death's open jaws.

It is true I had oftentimes to feign sleep when she was in the room, to get a little relief from the tiresome patter of her tongue; but, on the other hand, her playful attentions to Joshua amused and quieted him, and distracted his mind from his mother and me, which must be put to her credit in the general account. On the whole, Abby proved a good friend to me.

Dr. Smiley was not long in making his appearance, for he had got through his day's round of calls, and came smiling up to where I lay.

"Rheumatism, eh?" said the doctor, as he instinctively took hold of my wrist with his forefinger and thumb. "Thee's a young beginner, too, isn't thee? Show me

thy tongue." Then, after asking me a few questions and eliciting what information he thought necessary, he gave his verdict and began his preparations for attacking the enemy. "There 's a strong tendency to fever here. We must do something to reduce the inflammation first, and then we must eliminate the disease from thy body with the proper eliminating medicines."

Then Dr. Smiley fumbled over his waistcoat-pocket and pulled out his lancet, asking Rachel at the same time for a basin.

Caleb looked on with a good deal of concern whilst these operations were going forward, but whether he was sympathizing with me, or seriously calculating the cost of all this doctoring and fuss, and loss of my time to boot, I am unable to say. I think it not unlikely he was trying mentally to strike a balance between the amount he received from the Dutch wagoner and the total cost of my illness. But that is only a suspicion.

After the doctor had bound up the lancet's wound in my arm, and given directions about my diet and some other things, he said he would send some medicine around for me, with the necessary instructions for taking it. And then chuckling little Joshua under his chin, he took up his hat and stick to go.

"Doctor, here is some medicine left by Hannah Green for Henry to take. Had he better leave that off, or is he to go on with it?" Rachel asked.

"Oh, no, no! He must n't touch that. It 's very useful in certain cases, but it would do more harm than good in this case," the doctor answered, as he handed back the preparation after having smelled it. "Farewell. I 'll be here again to-morrow afternoon, and the quieter and warmer you keep the lad the better."

When Carrie Smiley brought the medicine about an hour after her father left me, I was too exhausted to speak much to her, even had I had the opportunity. Very few words passed between us, and if she did manifest a little curiosity to know when I was coming to school again, it was only because she regarded me as her chief rival there in the matter of reading; for, notwithstanding her raillery on the Sunday afternoon, she really did think me the best reader in the school, and as such she felt a pardonable desire to excel me, and to try conclusions with me again after a year's further practice.

As it was now settled that Charley was to begin his schooling on the Monday following, Carrie was informed that I should not be there for six or seven weeks yet. To me this was a far greater disappointment than it could be to her, though at that particular moment it was a matter of supreme indifference to me.

Another visit from Hannah Green in the evening closed the events of that day. She brought with her a good supply of leeches this time, but, on finding that Dr. Smiley had been there and done all the bleeding necessary, she quietly retired, with many kind wishes for my quick recovery.

Following the advice of the doctor to keep me quiet, it was arranged that Caleb should sleep up-stairs, leaving me to the care of Rachel and Charley, who slept in the same room and attended to my own and Joshua's wants when required.

CHAPTER XIV.

JIM JIMISON MEETS WITH AN ACCIDENT.

UNDER the skilful treatment of Dr. Smiley, and the comforting ministrations of the good Deborah Penrose, a very few days sufficed to bring about a rapid change for the better. Certainly my youth and strength were both in my favor, for otherwise the symptoms, so threatening at one time, must have resulted in a more aggravated form of the disease.

Deborah came daily, and sat by my side for hours reading or talking to me. On her second visit she brought, besides a number of books, sundry little delicacies to tempt my appetite, such as jelly, soup, preserves, and tamarind water to quench my thirst at night. She evidently had but a poor opinion of the resources of the Thomas's establishment in anything belonging to the sick-room.

"Now, if thee would like me, I will read thee something! Thee cannot hold a book yet, or I would leave thee one to read. Here is something I think thee 'll like: *The Swiss Family Robinson.* Has thee ever read that? No. Very well, then; I 'll begin, and if thee finds theeself getting tired or sleepy, thee must let me know, and I will stop."

Then she went on reading for an hour or more each day, ending always with a chapter in her Bible. Had I been her own son, she could not have been more assiduous in her attentions to my wants, both physical and mental, or shown a more affectionate solicitude for my safety and recovery. Besides a natural kindness of heart and a sense

of Christian duty, which were enough at any time to move Deborah Penrose where suffering and want were to be found, I believe she felt a more than common interest in my case, from a knowledge of the circumstances I was placed in, and the character of the people she found me with. And, in justice to the Society of which she was a member and an ornament, it is only right to say there were many other women there always ready, like herself, to aid the sick and succour the needy, though not many with tact and judgment equal to hers.

Despite Dr. Smiley's warning to me, on his last visit, about the necessity of wearing warmer clothing, if I wished to prevent a return of the disease, and despite the hint given by Deborah to Rachel on the same subject, no change was made in my attire; and I left the house again to face the wintry weather in the same suit I wore when the attack seized me. But, fortunately, I escaped any further sickness, and soon regained my health and strength.

When Charley finished his schooling for the winter, about the middle of February, I began my own second and last half quarter, which was to give the finishing touches to my education before leaving the paternal roof of the Thomases, and launching forth into the world to seek my fortune or to fight the battle of life on a new and broader field. This period might well have been passed over without mention, for nothing of interest or importance occurred during the six weeks to call for any notice or remark. But, being one of the many small events which go to make up the history of the two years, I give it its proper place in the narrative.

The novelty which gave so much interest to my first course had now worn off, and I simply took up my place and my studies like any other old scholar — without notice

and without sensation. With the single exception of Carrie Smiley, no one seemed to care whether I read well or ill, when I took my place in the chosen band of half a dozen or so that formed the class of first readers. Her interest in my performance was as lively as ever; but, as I have already intimated, it was only on scholastic grounds, and with an eye to her own proficiency. What she thought of it I never heard, for she did not again favor me with her opinion, or snub me for my supposed vanity in the matter.

Kleine, the artistic scholar, had seemingly graduated, for, after going through his quarter, he left, not intending to return again. How much his schooling profited him, I am unable to say. He left behind him many a souvenir, in the way of pencil sketches, in his peculiar style of art, the bulk of which fell to the lot of Carrie. What she thought of them, I do not know; but among the boys his spirited picture of the fight between Kauffman and me was always regarded as his masterpiece; and more than one copy of it was in existence when I came away.

My old enemy, Kauffman, was there again this winter; but when I began, he had nearly completed his term. Old grudges, however, were quite forgiven, if not forgotten, and we met together at ball-play as friendly as though nothing had ever happened between us. Perhaps I had become more countrified in the interim, and there was less of the "town boy" about me to excite his ire; but, in any case, he was as civil as could be desired. He also had on the same flashy habiliments as the winter before, in which respect he was a prominent feature of the school.

Several old faces were missing now, and new ones had taken their places. Aunt Mary occupied her platform

with the same dignity, and wielded her authority over her motley group of pupils with the same mild, but firm, sway as when I first knew her. She had heard, she said, about my sickness through Deborah Penrose and Charles Donovan, and had made frequent inquiries about me, but had never been able to get over to see me.

Reading, writing, and arithmetic were the studies pursued in this as in the last term, and if I made less progress than I ought to have done, it was no fault of Aunt Mary's, for she had both the ability and the will to teach me. Her skill in figures was something marvellous, for there was no problem, however difficult, in the arithmetic, from simple addition to mensuration, that she was not able to solve on the shortest notice.

Sums that I and other boys have spent hours over, until our overtaxed heads seemed ready to burst, and then with no satisfactory result, were, under the magic touch of her slate-pencil, shown to be as clear and easy as A, B, C, and we were sent back to our seats astonished at our own stupidity.

As to the girls, figures were not their forte; and I never knew one of them to get beyond compound multiplication, no matter how long and hard she might have worked. In other studies they were in no sense inferior to their rougher schoolmates.

One afternoon, when I had returned from school, Rachel informed me that Caleb had finally agreed with the owner of a small farm for its purchase, and that we were to take possession of it at the end of March. The place lay some few miles distant from where we then lived, and much farther from the village. To me this intelligence was not particularly interesting, for my time was fast drawing to a close, and I did not much care where they

lived after I was gone. She, however, was greatly elated at the prospect of having a fixed and permanent home of their own; and in the exuberance of her joy, she made known the happy fact to me.

From this time forward she became especially communicative and patronizing, and even went so far as to appeal to me in a small matter of dispute with her husband, as if my opinion was likely to weigh anything with either of them. But, however this may be, they both softened in their manner towards me, as the time drew near for my leaving, in a way that contrasted agreeably with their former treatment.

The other boy had already bound himself to Caleb as an apprentice for three years, on one of his visits to the city; but, I believe, with a settled determination to run away on the first show of any ill-treatment from his master. Up to this time things had gone pretty smoothly with him, and he saw no reason to complain much. The worst of the drudgery had fallen on Johnny and me, and Charley's time for hard knocks had not yet come. When John and I had both gone away, and he was left to the tender mercies of his master and mistress, alone on the new farm, he might see things in a different light, and the practical business of farming be brought home to him in a few of the rough lessons I had received.

As John's services were thought to be no longer needed on the place, he was discharged, and the family was thereby reduced, including the child, to five. It was thought that, as Jim Jimison could be called on in case of need at this not very busy season, the services of a regular hand like John, with his monthly pay, could be dispensed with; and so he left us, to find employment elsewhere in the neighborhood. He declared that nothing

would ever induce him to come back and work for "dem folks agin as long as he libed, not even ef he was gwine to starve for work." But there was no fear of that, for Johnny was too good a hand and too well known to go begging for work a single day.

It was about this time, towards the end of March, that poor Jim Jimison met with an accident which, though not very serious, added greatly to his notoriety in and about the village, and became the subject of many a jest and much side-splitting laughter to the good people thereof.

An event which both Jim and his wife had been looking forward to with no small amount of joy and pride came to pass one night, which called for the immediate services of both doctor and nurse, and not a minute was to be lost in fetching them. A terrific pounding at the wall told Rachel what was the matter, and, according to promise, she got up and went to the aid of her friend and neighbor forthwith.

The night was cold and the rain was falling in torrents—but this made no difference to the happy husband; he heeded them not in the least. To slip on such garments as were nearest at hand, and then to rush out, hatless and bootless, to the barn and clap the bridle on his horse, was the work of a few seconds. The ride to the doctor's was a matter of ten minutes, and when Jim was mounted we may be sure he did not let the grass grow under his little horse's feet, but galloped away as if for his life.

Now, it happened, unfortunately for him, that on his way there was a large and flourishing tannery, kept by one Peter Woonsettler, father of little Aaron, my school-mate. On one side of the road stood Peter's house, and directly opposite was the tannery, open to the road, and

with a score or so of vats ranged in parallel rows in the yard, one row being in close proximity to the highway.

The tannery had its inevitable big dog — that "Big Dog of the Tanyard," which at that time so often stood as the type and symbol of important men, village statesmen, commercial magnates, or political leaders — and Peter's dog, from his place in the house-porch, spied Jim pelting down the road towards him like a madman. He made up his mind at once what to do, and just as Jim got up to the house the dog made for his horse's head with the suddenness of lightning, and with all the fury of his bull-dog nature.

So sharp was the attack, that both horse and rider were for a moment staggered; then, with a spring to escape from the dog's teeth, the little horse came butt up against the narrow footway on the opposite side, stumbled, fell on his knees, and threw his master plump and headlong into vat No. 2!

The vat was nearly full of raw hides, immersed in brine, and it was on this slippery and unstable footing that Jim found himself so unexpectedly placed at one A. M. on that cheerless spring night. To get out was not possible; for the dog, seeing him trespassing on his master's property, promptly left the horse and went to watch him.

Barney as promptly picked himself up and scuttled off home again, leaving Jim to his fate. Had he been a dog he would have stood by his master, even unto death. But horses care only for themselves, and Barney only obeyed a horse's instinct in seeking his own safety at the barn, outside of which he was found sometime afterwards.

As Jim slipped and struggled in his slimy bath, he shouted at the top of his voice for help, and the more he shouted and floundered about the more excited and furi-

ous the dog became. He tore around the vat, first on one side and then on the other, barking and snapping at the unhappy man without a moment's cessation, as if determined to show no quarter, and cut off every chance of escape.

At length a bed-room window was opened opposite, and the head of the tanner appeared thereat.

"Who 's dat?" cried the tanner.

"Never you mind who it is! Call this —— dog off, or I 'll, I 'll, I 'll!" shouted Jim back again in a voice of thunder, but without finishing his sentence or his threat, for the dog, fancying himself now backed by his master, cut him short by a snap that nearly took one of his ears off.

Then the tanner whistled and called to the beast:

"Here, Skiver, here, here; come here; come here." But Skiver was not to be fooled in that way, even by his master. He had witnessed the whole affair from the beginning, and knew his duty well enough; so he stuck to his prisoner in spite of his master's command to leave him. "Wait a minute, and I come dere."

And then Peter, dressing himself with all possible celerity, hurried to Jim's relief. What Jim said; how he stormed, and fumed, and swore, and threatened destruction to the dog, his master, and, in fact, the whole tanning establishment, as soon as he was on *terra firma* again, dripping from head to foot with brine, I cannot pretend to give a faithful account of. His condition and appearance, as described afterwards by Peter, were pitiable in the extreme. But worse to him than this was his anxiety about his wife, who, never dreaming what had happened, was looking for his return every minute with the doctor. To finish his errand in the state he then was was out of the question, for further exposure to the cold was not only

dangerous to himself, but his unearthly appearance would have alarmed both doctor and nurse had he knocked at their doors. So Peter kindly undertook the duty for him, and Jim trotted back to his house, on foot, as rapidly as he could go.

"Don't be afeered, Jule; it's only me," said the dripping husband, by way of preliminary notice to his wife, as he presented to her astonished eyes his tanned and trembling figure. The two women for a time could hardly believe their senses, as they saw this strange transformation enter the room! They knew the voice to be Jim's voice, but the face, and form, and color were a mystery to them! But the story was soon told, and their fears were quieted; whilst the sufferer himself was soon encased in a dry suit of clothes, and his natural complexion restored to him. The doctor soon came, and then followed Hannah, the nurse, and before morning Jim found himself the happy father of a bouncing boy.

But the affair did not end there, for soon the story was in every one's mouth; and wherever you went — outside the meeting-house on First-days, at the taverns, at the blacksmith's, and at the store — you were sure to hear something about Jim Jimison's plunge bath. Assembled around the stove in Tommy Brown's store one evening were a number of villagers, discussing politics and gossipping about the affairs and people of the place, as was their custom, when Jim entered the store.

"How does thee do, Jim?"

"I 'm well enough, thank thee. How is thee, Nathan? How are you, Eli? Hallo, William; is that thee? How does thee git on?"

And then, after these general salutations, Jim took his seat with the party.

"Jim," said Eli, in a quiet and confidential way, as he bent over towards him, "does thee know a good place about here to get a good tanning cheap?"

"Aye, Jim," said another; "come, tell us about that little game at the tan-yard t' other night. Peter says he 's going to bring an action against thee for trespass."

"I guess it 's not the first time Jim has taken his baths in Peter's vats on the sly, only this time he got caught," said Tommy Brown.

But to all these sallies, which provoked much laughter, Jim, though annoyed, made little or no reply.

CHAPTER XV.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

THE end of March found us busy with preparations for removal to our new home, to aid in which I gave up a few days of my schooling, and to that extent neglected my education. Daniel Faulkner was to take possession of the farm again on the first of April, by which time everything was to be removed and all arrears settled. As the two men parted friendly, I suppose there was no particular cause for dissatisfaction on either side; though, in a community like that, and among men who, as a rule, make peace and forbearance their guiding principles, causes that in other places would lead to quarrels and litigation, were there overlooked or condoned. It would, therefore, be unsafe to say that the landlord and tenant were in perfect accord over their settlement because there was no quarrel.

There existed no law-court or police-office at Friendship, and litigation was almost unknown. There was only one lawyer in the place, and what little business he had was in conveyancing. This was Hiram Skinner, or "Squire Skinner," as he was called, a tall, portly man, of fifty or thereabouts. Skinner was not a Quaker, and I don't believe anybody ever knew what his religious views were; but he was a blustering, idle, overbearing, and generally disagreeable fellow. He was also a great politician, and, being able to talk or bully down any other man in the place, was generally regarded as a very smart man, and looked up to by many of the younger men with considerable awe. Almost any evening the Squire could be found at Tommy Brown's store, discussing politics with the men of the village, who made that their common rendezvous, and who looked on him as their oracle. In fact, the Squire was the "Big Dog of the Tan-Yard" in and about Friendship; and but for one evil habit he had — tippling — everybody said he would have been long before sent to the State Legislature.

But whiskey and idleness kept him always poor, for when any business came in his way you never knew when it would be done. He used to boast that he *never did any work between meals.* He said it was not healthy to work between meals, and he was not going to do it for anybody. But this was only when he was in his cups. At other times he talked sensibly enough.

After the heavy stock had been carted away, load by load, we took our final leave of Faulkner Farm on the first of April.

The removal of the live-stock was again left to me, assisted this time by Charley, and with pretty much the same results as on the first occasion, a year before. The

animals were as stupid and ungovernable as ever, and only wanted the smallest opening into a man's field, barn-yard, or garden, — it did n't matter to them which, so long as it was off the straight line, — as an excuse to make a sudden stampede, which only an immense amount of labor, tact, sound thrashing, and loud screaming could reduce to anything like order again.

But, happily, these little troubles were soon over, and men and beasts, household goods, and the general stock-in-trade of the farm were all safely landed and quartered in their proper places before the day was fairly past.

Jim Jimison, his wife, and child were allowed to remain in their rooms until the wife's recovery made her removal to some other, but as yet unknown, abode safe.

The new farm, on which I was to spend the last two months of my apprenticeship, was a place of considerably less than one hundred acres, including the usual proportion of woodland. It had on it the ordinary farm buildings, consisting of a goodly-sized, one-storied stone house, barn, wagon-sheds, etc., etc. A pretty stream of water, well stocked with fish and shaded by willows, ran through its fields. Under a man of taste and adequate means it might have been made a most desirable, not to say picturesque, home of, for the land was good and well fenced, and the situation excellent.

But the Thomases had no eye for the picturesque or the ornamental in nature; and had the place been another Paradise, they would have been totally blind to its beauties, and thought only of the quickest and cheapest way of getting in the crop of figs and apples, and the best market to sell them in.

Thus the first thing they began to talk about, when they got quietly settled and to feel a little at home, was

to pull down the neat, cosy, old-fashioned stone house, which was nicely retired from the road, and shaded by fine old buttonwood trees, and to build close to the high road a two-story, square, wooden house, and paint it white.

But this *improvement* they were at that time unable to carry out, for want of means. Though their farm was small, and the price paid for it less than fifty dollars an acre, a portion of the purchase-money remained on mortgage. To work off this indebtedness, and to stand "clear of the world," was now the aim and object of their lives. So the old skinflint economy of eating the poorest and selling the best of everything the place produced was kept up now as before, and the "penny saved is a penny earnt" theory brought into daily and hourly practice all round.

As in the days of my city innocence, I longed and hankered after country luxuries, country liberality and open-handedness, country delights and pleasures, country men and women, in their native simplicity and ingenuousness, so did I now impatiently count the weeks and days for my return to my native city, and to the comparative ease, comfort, plenty, and luxury, which I so gladly turned my back upon only two short years before.

Those two years of petty tyranny, hard knocks, hard living, and hard work had opened my eyes wide to the realities of country life, and taught me the valuable lessons that neither town nor country possessed a monopoly of the good things of the world, but that both have their good and bad, their bright and dark sides of life, and that human nature is pretty much the same, whether under the homely garb of a country farmer or the smooth exterior of the more polished citizen.

The only difference between the beginning and the end of my term was in the greater kindness and consideration now shown me by my master and mistress. The labor was equally hard, the fare as coarse, and the clothing as scant, but there was no talk of switchings, no growling on the part of Caleb, or nagging by his better half. It is true that Caleb's kindness was of a purely negative character, and never approached to the affable or genial, whereas Rachel, softer and more pliant than her husband, became almost gushing in her good-nature towards me. She said all kinds of agreeable things, and indulged me with many pleasant visions of what the future had in store for me.

"I only hope, Henry, that Charley will be as good a boy as thee has been. Thee knows I allers liked thee from the beginnin'. I 'll allers think of thee as our fust boy, and thee shall never want a friend or a home as long as I live. I am determined, Henry, if our little boy ever grows up, he shall have as good an eddication as thee has had. I often tell Caley that I will not have Joshu-a grow up like ourselves, with no more schoolin' than we have had. He shall be as good a scholar as thee is, Henry. Wherever thee is, I 'll allers remember Henry Sellers as long as I live. I told Caley on'y yesterday if thee 'd like to stay in this neighborhood, we 'd try and git thee in Tommy Brown's store, or else git thee in with Squire Skinner, to learn to be a lawyer. I know thee 'll git on, Henry, wherever thee is, or whatever thee takes to."

Thus would Rachel talk, and, I believe, with real sincerity, whenever by any chance we were thrown together alone. No man or woman is perfectly consistent at all times, but all are influenced, more or less, by the circumstances they find themselves placed in. Rachel's

friendship could be of but little use to me now, it is true, but, such as it was, it was genuine; and I have no doubt she felt a sincere sorrow at the prospect of parting with me.

Only once did Caleb allow himself to bend a little, and that was one morning at the breakfast-table, some two or three days before I left. Rachel had just finished a pleasant little eulogy of me, and ended with an appeal to her husband, which he probably found it hard to resist.

"I know thee 'll allers speak well of Henry when he 's gone; won't thee, Caley? And if he ever wants a ree-commend anywheres, I 'm sure thee 'll give it to him; won't thee?"

"I 'll allers say what I say now, — that I don't want a better boy than Henry Sellers has ben; and whenever he gits tired of the city, and thinks he 'd like to come back to the country agin, he 'll allers find the latch-string a-hangen' outside of the door." Then pausing midway in a slice of bread he was in the act of cutting, and half closing his eyes, as if to give emphasis and earnestness to his words, he added: "And there 's one thing I 'll allers say for Henry, and that there is, I 'll back him agin any boy anywheres about here for breaken' steers, or for driven' 'em, either. A better pair of steers ain't to be found, or any that 's better broke than the pair that Henry broke."

This was not only a high commendation for Caleb to give, but an unusually long speech for him, more especially at breakfast, where, as at other meals, the silent system was generally kept up. I think it not unlikely he intended by his speech to excite the emulation of my successor, Charley Donovan, who sat opposite, as well as to satisfy Rachel. No answer or acknowledgment was ex-

pected from me to these little compliments, and so I made none. The subject then dropped, much to Caleb's relief, I am sure, for he was not fond of talking, much less of praising anybody.

One day Caleb and his wife found it necessary to go over to Doylestown, the county-town, to transact some business, or discharge some official duty in connection with the settlement of her family's estate. Accordingly, the gig was got out and furbished up, the harness cleaned and polished, and everything about the concern put in apple-pie order. The two were dressed in their very best attire, and looked as neat and spruce as new pins. Joshua was left in the care of Charley for the day, with many and precise instructions what to do under every conceivable circumstance. They started for their destination soon after breakfast, and the journey being one of consequence, and it being on a fine day in May, it was made a pleasure excursion of; so much so, indeed, that their common travelling companion — the wallet, with its store of cold pork, pie, etc. — was left behind, it being their intention to dine at an inn, with Joshua and Martha, who were to meet there on the same business. Everything looked promising for a day of pure enjoyment, and both Caleb and Rachel were the picture of happiness and conjugal affection, as they took their places in the gig and drove away.

My own day's work was in the field, hoeing corn; and fearing I might shirk my duty in his absence, Caleb did not forget, in passing me at the front gate, to leave a parting injunction to "git on with that there corn, and try if he can't git through with the field by the time I come home." Nevertheless, I could not help loitering awhile at the gate, and watching, with admiring eyes, the

comfortable vehicle, as it rolled along the road and glistened and twinkled in the sunlight, and thought that that indeed was something to live for. If only fortune would smile on me, and make me master of such an equipage, how happy should I not be!

Hoeing corn was an occupation I always did detest; so, as soon as the gig was out of sight, I shouldered my hoe and hurried off to the field, determined, if possible, to finish the job that day, and have done with it probably forever.

Whilst hard at my work I saw at some distance, skulking along by the side of the fence, as if trying to avoid being noticed, our dog, on his way to the barn from one of the lower fields. Observing something unusual in his appearance, I called him; and then, as he came nearer, I plainly saw marks of blood about his head and shoulders. "Oh, ho, Mr. Paddy; so you 've had a fight, have you?" I said to myself. But this view of the case was soon dispelled, for, though there was much blood, there were no wounds to indicate a struggle of that kind. At once the thought flashed across my mind that he had been up to mischief; and laying down my hoe, I went in the direction from whence he had come. His guilty look and his impatience to reach the barn when he saw my intention confirmed my suspicion of his criminality.

There, sure enough, in one of the fields bordering the woods, lay two dead sheep, torn and mangled in a frightful manner, whilst the rest of the small flock stood panting and trembling in one corner of the field. There was but one thing to be done — to drag the carcasses to a fence corner and await the return of Caleb. As to Paddy, I felt that his fate was already sealed, for when a dog once takes to sheep-worrying there is but one way to cure him,

and that is to cut short his career by a musket-ball. This I felt sure would be his fate before he was many hours older.

In most cases it is difficult to account for this propensity in dogs to kill sheep, but I firmly believe in this one hunger had as much to do with it as anything else. The poor brute was always kept in a state of semi-starvation, his only food being an occasional slice of brown bread from our table and such scraps as chance threw in his way in the woods and fields. Every morsel of animal flesh in our house was utilized for the family table; so that the odds and ends which fall to the lot of dogs in most houses were in ours unknown. There is that to be said in mitigation of Paddy's crime, though I knew well enough it would weigh nothing with his master, for against it there was the fact of his having killed *two* sheep, which looked like pure wantonness.

Charley and I talked the matter over at dinner-time, and it made us sad to think that the poor dog, who had hitherto been so good and faithful, and of whom we were both so fond, should have suddenly taken to such evil courses, and brought on himself the hard penalty of death.

CHAPTER XVI

MY FREEDOM AND MY FREEDOM-SUIT.

THOUGH I did not accomplish my task that day, of finishing the corn-field, I returned to the house in time to look after my other duties, of milking the cows and attending to the other animals in the evening.

"I wonder what 's keepin' our folks so long? I expected them home before this," said I to Charley, on my way to the dairy with the evening's milking.

"That 's what I want to know. And won't I be glad when they do come? I 've had all I want of this youngster for one day. I wish you 'd come and take a tur'rn at 'em now; I 'll do your wurrek if you will."

"Hullo! what 's that comen' round the point of the road there, Charley? That 's them, as sure as a gun. No it ain't, either; Cale never drives like that. Yes, it is, too; I see now it 's Jenny, by the way she throws her head."

"Sure, it must be for Joshua they're driven', or they 'd never hurry like that at all."

The question was soon solved by the gig dashing gaily up to the gate, which stood open for it ready to enter. Then, as it quietly approached the house, it became apparent from the whining tone of Rachel's voice that something was wrong there! A closer inspection of their faces showed Caleb to be in a state of decided bemuddlement, and Rachel herself weeping and excited!

"I 'll tell Henry, that I will! I 'll tell him how thee has served me!" were the first words that caught my astonished ear.

Caleb then alighted, and with unsteady steps he struck a zigzag course for the other side of the gig to help his wife down; but in this he was too late, for with my aid she was out almost as soon as he.

"Henry, come and give me thy hand," she said, in a voice trembling with rage and grief. Then she proceeded to unbosom herself to me, as she had threatened to do. "Henry, what does thee think? He has made hisself so horrid drunk he don't know what he 's about. It 's a wonder we 're here at all, that it is. I thought every minute we 'd be upsot and the cheer smashed to pieces, he 's ben drivin' at such a rate! I said I 'd tell thee as soon as I saw thee. It 's shameful, that it is."

Had Caleb knocked me down the first thing after he touched the ground, I think I should have felt far less uncomfortable and bewildered than I did after this appeal of Rachel's. One look at that face, with its expression of reckless deviltry, was quite enough to quell any good intention I might have felt to take up the quarrel for her. They both knew full well that I would not dare to interfere in the affair; so, believing that discretion in such a case was the better part of chivalry, as well as of valor, I kept quiet and said nothing. I am, nevertheless, of the opinion that — such was Caleb's affection for his wife — had I had the strength and courage to thrash him on the spot, he would have liked me all the more for it. He would have overlooked the injury to himself for the sake of my devotion to her. But I could do nothing more than make a poor show of my sympathy for her by appearing grieved and sour.

"I 'm unbentedly determined I 'll never go out with him agin as long as I live. My life ain't safe with him."

"Why, Rachel, thee 's safe enough, ain't thee? I

hain't done thee no hurt, have I?" Caleb replied, in a tone that was intended to be soft and conciliating, but which only made matters worse.

"Safe! Yes; but no thanks to thee. Thee tried hard enough to break my neck, and thy own, too, with thee nasty, rotten rum-drinken'. And Joshua ain't a bit better than thee is. I won't be a bit surprised to hear that he has had a smash-up and broke Martha's neck, and his own, too, in the bargain. You ain't ere-a-one of you fit to be trusted away from your own homes. That 's jist what you ain't."

And, with this parting shot at her husband, Rachel turned to go in the house, whilst Caleb, followed by me, went to put up the horse and gig. And thus ended in cloud and storm a day that opened with clear sunshine and a bright sky.

But, no; the end was not yet. Fresh trouble awaited the unfortunate man, for he had yet to hear of the sheep-killing; and this would be the unkindest cut of all. Pleased at having heard the last of his wife's upbraidings, he was rapidly softening down to a state of happy, but muddled, tranquillity, and was unusually good-natured.

"Well, Henry, and how has he and Charley ben a-gitten' on to-day? All right?"

"We 've been all right enough; but I can't say as much for Paddy."

"Paddy! Why, what 's the matter with him?"

"He 's been after the sheep to-day, and killed two of 'em."

Caleb was about to pull the collar off the mare's neck, but suddenly stopped half-way, and, placing his hands on his hips, he turned savagely towards me, as if in doubt whether to go at me or the dog.

"Killed two of *our* sheep, did thee say?"

"Yes."

"And did thee see it done?"

"No. I only saw him sneakin' up home by the fence, when it was all over. Then I thought by his looks something was wrong, and went and looked; and there I saw what he 'd been up to."

"Where is the sheep?"

"I left them in the field, up in a fence corner, for you to see them."

Then Caleb seized the ox-whip, and asked where Paddy was. The dog, with a guilty knowledge that what he had done was all wrong, and would have to be answered for sooner or later, had slunk away under the barn, there to wait and see the result. When Caleb called him, instead of springing forward in his usual way, he only beat the straw under him with his tail, and looked up appealingly at his master. At last, however, he surrendered, and followed him towards the field of blood; and not long after cries of intense pain and agony came floating across the air from that direction, and told us too plainly that poor Paddy was paying the penalty of his misdeeds.

"There! I reckon he 'll never kill another sheep," Caleb said, as he joined us at the supper-table, with a look that rendered any further explanation quite unnecessary.

"Has thee killed him?" Rachel inquired.

"Well, ef I hain't killed him, it ain't my fault. I guess he won't trouble us agin, anyhow."

Then, after a pause of a minute or two, Rachel asked:

"And what has thee done with the sheep?"

"I left 'em a-hangen' onto a tree till the mornin'. It 's

too late to-night to do anything with 'em, ef I was to bring 'em up here."

Early next morning Caleb and I took the ox-cart, and went to fetch the murdered sheep, which we found hanging where he had left them, quite undisturbed; but there was no appearance of the dog there. This excited Caleb's wonder, for he not only intended to kill him, but made sure he had done so. The mystery was cleared up on our return to the barn, for in the same spot he had left with fear and trembling the evening before, he lay stretched at full length, with every appearance of being dead. He had been pounded almost to a jelly — his head bruised and swollen, his eyes closed, and one leg broken. Poor fellow! much better would it have been had your master sent a ball through your head at once! Or, better still, remembering your past services in saving the lives of two valuable oxen, at the risk of your own, to have sent you away to some tan-yard, or other place, where there were no sheep to worry.

How he had managed to drag himself up all that distance in the state he was, I cannot imagine. When I spoke to him he made a feeble attempt to shake his tail, as if pleased with any token of kindness in his painful extremity. For a day or two he refused all food, his life seeming to hang by a thread; but after that he began to rally, to my very great joy, and by the time I left the place he was moving about again, though only a shadow of what he had been.

When breakfast was over, the day after their return from Doylestown, Rachel called me into the sitting-room, and, with an expression of great delight, began forthwith to open a mysterious parcel lying on the table before her.

"I thought while we was in Doylestown, Henry, I

might as well git the stuff for thy freedom-suit. Thee 's only got another week with us, thee knows; and I 'm goin' to have thee clothes made up by a tailor, so we ain't got no time to lose. See; that 's for thee pants, and that 's for a jacket. I wanted Caleb to get thee a coat, but he said he knowed thee 'd like a jacket better. There! ain't that nice for a jacket? It 's velveteen. And here 's a waistcoat pattern for thee, too. And here 's a cravat. Thee must never go back to town with thee neck bare, like thee goes about here. Now, thee must take the things theeself over to Isaac Webster's this evenin', and tell him to take thee measure and make them up proper, in the best way he knows how. Caleb will get thee a hat in town, when you 're both there next week."

All this was said by her, as she shook out the several articles for my inspection, with as much pride as any city belle would show in exhibiting her bridal dresses.

Though I was not so much smitten with the outfit myself as Rachel was, I still tried to express the gratitude that was due to them for such generous liberality. The goods were not of a costly description, it was easy to see; and being all of different materials and inharmonious styles and colors, I could not look forward to my reappearance among my city friends and acquaintances in this novel drapery with the same pride and satisfaction that warmed Rachel's heart, as she contemplated it.

However, after the day's work was over, I took the precious tokens of my coming "freedom" to the village tailor, fully trusting in his judgment and skill to mould them into a shape befitting the time and circumstances.

"Now, Henry, be sure and tell Isaac it 's thy freedom-suit, and thee 's goin' to show thee friends in the city

what a country tailor can do. Does thee hear?" Rachel said, as I left the house, with the parcel under my arm.

Isaac Webster was one of the great guns of the village of Friendship. He made clothes up for all the folks about — Quakers and Dutch — who did not make their own, or buy them in the city ready-made. For this reason, and being supposed to reflect in his own person the fashions of the day, he, like most country tailors and dressmakers the world over, to prove himself in nowise behind the city professors of the art, always went far beyond them, and grossly exaggerated the prevailing fashions. Thus, if coat-waists were worn rather short, you had to look for Isaac's waist somewhere about his shoulder-blades. If "pants" were worn full over the instep, Isaac's covered his boots, and the toes thereof were no longer visible.

Though born a Quaker, and still attending meeting regularly on First-days, he followed the ways of the world rather more than was consistent with the rules of that persuasion, and, being a well-made, handsome young man, he was looked up to by the less orthodox part of the community as the very pink of fashion. Moreover, Isaac was known for his love of fast horses, and always kept at the "Three Tun" stables a spanking trotter that could cover his mile in two minutes forty seconds, according to his own watch.

And this was the overpowering individual I, a cow-boy of sixteen, bare-footed, jacketless, waistcoatless, was sent to encounter alone!

When I reached Isaac's place of business he was sitting with his fashionable heels on his little window-shelf, and surrounded by some half-dozen villagers, including Squire Skinner, Tommy Brown, and Dr. Smiley.

It was a great condescension on Isaac's part to attend

to me at all at that late hour, and especially under such circumstances; but he did. He begged the gentlemen to excuse him; he heard my story; then, "running the rule over me," he put down the figures in chalk on his counter. Then he opened the parcel, and a supercilious smile stole across his face as he carelessly tossed the articles out.

"What 's this?" demanded the tailor, as he held up a strip of nankeen intended for my trousers.

"That 's for my pants."

"Your pants! Why, do you think you 're a-going to get a pair of pants out of that?"

"I don't know; I did n't buy it."

Hereupon the half-dozen visitors turned to look, and for the nonce, dropping their discussion about the spread of popery on the American Continent, became deeply interested in my case, and listened attentively to all that passed.

"I reckon he won't be very partic'lar which of 'em thee makes for pants and which for the coat, Isaac, as long as thee fixes 'em up smart, will he?"

Here I recognized the voice and chuckle of the little fat man who chaffed Daniel Faulkner about his colt, at the meeting-house shed, a couple of years before. A general tittering among the company followed this witticism, and its success stimulated the others.

"Friend Isaac, if thee can make up a suit of clothes out o' them scraps, I must look sharp after thee in futur', when thee does anything for me," another, and the shabbiest-dressed man in the lot, said.

"Oh, I 'll back Squire Skinner to get up a *suit* out of smaller materials than those, any time," put in Tommy Brown, the rich store-keeper and money-lender.

"Yes; when folks lend money at big interest, and we

have to squeeze the borrower to get it again," retorted Hiram, with a sly wink at the company. The success of this thrust produced an immense outburst, in which even Tommy himself joined, and made me think the little fat man must inevitably expire of spontaneous combustion, so intensely inflamed did his fat face become with excess of laughter. Though all felt bound to laugh at the Squire's jokes, they all knew he meant this only for a squib; for Thomas Brown was not a hard man towards his debtors, but, on the contrary, was generally very indulgent.

"Whose boy did thee say thee was?" Isaac asked, when the fun was over.

"Caleb Thomas's."

"And this is thy freedom-suit, eh?"

"Yes."

"And you 're a-going back to Feladelphy, you say?"

"Yes."

"When do you go?"

"Next First-day night, when Caleb goes to market."

"Very well; I 'll see what I can do with these things. Thee can come over on Seventh-day evening for them if thee likes."

Dr. Smiley then came up, having recognized me, and, shaking me kindly by the hand, inquired about my health; said he was sorry they were to lose me, and then bade me a cordial farewell, with a sincere wish for my prosperity and happiness.

The last week of my apprenticeship was one of very considerable indulgence, if not of pleasure; for, besides being treated with unusual kindness in-doors, I was permitted to leave my work early in the evening, for the purpose of paying parting visits to my friends. These

included Jim Jimison, his wife and sister, the good Deborah Penrose, the school-mistress, Joshua and Martha Ball, Caleb's sisters, and many others. Most of them were warm in their expressions of good-will towards me; as much so, indeed, as though I had always lived among them, and they felt a special interest in my safety and welfare. If there was any exception to this friendliness, it was from the Balls; for Josh was too uncouth to give expression to any good feeling, if even he had any. So to my remark, "I 've come to bid you good-by," he simply said:

"Thee 's goin' away, is thee, Hen? Well, farewell; I s'pose thee 'll come and see us some time or another!" and then went his way to the barn, as though bored by even that little bit of ceremony.

Martha put on the best smile her leathery little face was capable of, and piped out a thin

"Farewell, Henry; thee must come and see us if thee ever comes up here agin."

As Dick had gone away with his cart somewhere, I did not see him then, though he afterwards came over to take leave of me, and ask me to carry a letter to his mother for him.

Among the other noteworthy events of this week was the sudden change and improvement in our bill of fare. The death of the two sheep, for which the poor dog was now suffering so severely, furnished us, as well as some of our near neighbors, with a superabundance of fresh mutton, which, though of very doubtful quality, was a most welcome change from the everlasting salt pork which formed our unvarying diet, morning, noon, and night.

Going to market was always an occasion of much importance to the farmers about here, for the distance was

too great, and the time occupied too valuable, to permit of many journeys in the year. Thus the preparation for starting always caused a great deal of fussing and bustle some days beforehand. It was then, when all was ready—when his wagon was loaded with the various articles intended for sale, his two fine horses geared in their places—that Caleb was to be seen in his full glory. He strutted about his wagon with as much pride as though it was a first-class mail packet, with her steam up and her "blue-peter" flying, all ready for sea, and only waiting for him, the commander, to give the word to start. He looked as though the eyes of the world were on him, and the responsibility almost too much for one pair of shoulders to carry. His words were few, but his face was stern, and it would have been the wrong time for either man or beast to trifle with him! Did the horse get a little uneasy to start, it was: "Woa, Rock! Does he want his head broke? If he does, he 'll git it soon." Did the mare in her impatience snap at the horse and make a false start, he would cry: "Woho, Jennie! What does she mean by that there? She 'll ketch it soon if she don't look out!"

It was always a relief to me to see the last of him at such times, for I breathed more freely when he was gone. And even on this, the last day of my service, when I was about to accompany him to town, I could not altogether shake off my uneasiness and dread of him.

Faithful to his promise, the tailor finished my suit of clothes on Saturday, and on Sunday afternoon, when the preparations for leaving were nearly over, and there was no longer any fear of soiling them, I retired to my room, and, casting aside the well-worn garments of servitude, arrayed myself in the robes of freedom. If the struggle

to get them on was hard, I suppose it is no more than liberty always meets with in such changes! But the real agony came afterwards, when I began to move about with them; for instead of finding myself easy and comfortable, as befits a state of emancipation, I was as unhappy, stiff, and helpless as though pinioned ready for the executioner. The only thing that fitted me was my necktie. All the other things were as tight as the skin of a sausage or the outside case of a fashionable umbrella.

But to make amends for the general scantiness of the pants, Isaac had given his master-stroke to their lower extremities, and brought them down in an ample sweep over the whole foot, giving me somewhat the appearance of a pouter pigeon, with its long, clean legs and wide-spread, feathered feet.

This was the "freedom-suit" that formed one of the chief clauses in the apprenticeship indentures two years before, and which Rachel was never tired of picturing to me as the final, crowning piece of all the benefits I had received and was to receive during my stay with them! This was to be my travelling costume in that long night-journey to the city, in a springless market-wagon, over a rough and dusty road! The festive garments in which I was to celebrate my restoration to family and friends after my two years' exile!

Rachel herself was greatly amused on seeing me emerge from the house in the strange dress, and, whilst pretending to blame the tailor for his stupid mistake, she gave way to uncontrollable laughter at my awkward appearance. There is no doubt, however, that Isaac had done his best with the scanty materials at his disposal, and that the real fault was in the parsimony of their purchasers.

Caleb was too much engaged with his horses and wagon

to notice me until we were on the point of starting, when even he was struck with the ridiculousness of the thing, and, with a comical expression of face, said:

"Why, Henry; he 's putt hisself rather too fur through his new clo'se, haint he?"

The laughter of Rachel was turned to tears when the time for a final farewell came, for, whether real or affected, her agitation was great when I went to take leave of her at the cottage door.

"Well, farewell, Henry. Mind thee reecollects what I told thee. If ever thee 's in trouble, or wants a friend, thee 's to come to me. I 'll never forgit thee. And mind thee sends me a letter when thee 's settled, so as I may know where to write to thee," she said, amidst her tears, and with an emotion that communicated itself even to me, and for the time made me ashamed of my own ingratitude for leaving so good a friend.

Then, when she had recovered herself a little, she added a parting reminder to Caleb "not to forgit Henry's hat" whilst in town.

A friendly shake of the hand with Charley Donovan, a last salute to the infant Joshua, and an affectionate pat on the head of my real friend, Paddy, the dog, brought to a close my two years of farming life in Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

My connection with the Thomases, however, did not finally end until the next day. We reached the "Red Lion" yard about four o'clock on Monday morning, at the end of May. The journey was performed in almost a dead silence, for, as our contract was completed, and nothing remaining to be talked about, nothing was said by either. Caleb Thomas was altogether too matter-of-fact a man to give way to any sentimentality on such a

trifling occasion as this, and, therefore, had never a word to say, either about the past or future of my career. We took turn and turn about in driving and sleeping on the way, and he troubled himself no more about my welfare after he had done with me than if I had been a calf or a firkin of butter he was taking to market.

Before the market had fairly begun, and as soon as the shops in the city were open for business, Caleb accompanied me to a hatter's in the neighborhood of the "Red Lion," and, after a great deal of bargaining, completed my outfit with a second-hand black hat. Then, bidding me a last farewell, with as much cordiality as his nature would permit, he hurried back to the market-yard, leaving me free to go where I liked and do what I pleased with myself.

I felt no manner of hesitation as to what this was to be, for I knew well enough that my mother was waiting to receive me with open arms, which ought to have made me profoundly thankful and happy. But freedom does not always mean happiness, and it would have been hard to find in the whole city of Philadelphia, at that particular moment, a more wretched being than I was.

A feeling of sadness, of desolation, took possession of me, as though a mere castaway, and having no connection, sympathy, or anything in common with the people about me, who were now beginning to fill the busy street. My life had become somehow identified with the scenes and things I had left behind me; and, though unwilling to remain among them longer, under the same conditions, I nevertheless found the sudden transition to a city life, on that early summer's morning, almost more than I could bear.

Taking a last look at Caleb, as his figure retreated down

the street, I turned, with an overflowing heart, towards my old home.

On the way I passed the Episcopal Cemetery, and there stood and lingered for some time, on the spot where, just two years before, I met with the strange adventure with the countryman. Then the words, "Sonny, would thee like to go to the country?" seemed to ring on my ears again, but with a different meaning, and in a sadder tone than before, for now I knew what it was "TO GO TO THE COUNTRY."

CHAPTER XVII.

FRIENDSHIP REVISITED.

IT was many years after I left the Thomases before I had an opportunity of returning to see them again. Part of this time was spent in New York, and the remainder in England. To many it might seem strange that I should care at all to visit a place and people associated with so many unpleasant recollections. And I can hardly myself account for the singular fascination that always drew me to the spot, whenever my thoughts wandered in that direction. Curiosity, probably, had more to do with it than anything else, and the longer I was away the stronger the feeling seemed to grow.

During the few weeks that I remained with my mother in Philadelphia, at the end of my apprenticeship, I made repeated calls at the "Red Lion" yard, on pretence of inquiring of the farmers coming there about Caleb and his family, but really because I felt myself drawn there by an irresistible attraction in the place itself. Once,

when in New York, I received a letter from Rachel, in answer to one I wrote to her, according to my promise. In this she addressed me as "My dear boy," and said what happiness it gave her to hear I was well and getting on in the world, and that they had been looking for a visit from me, and so forth.

Charley Donovan also wrote to me from Philadelphia, when he had returned there, and been apprenticed to a trade more suited to his taste than farming. He told me that once, not long after I left, upon some case of ill-usage, he had attempted to run away, but was followed by Caleb on horseback, and after travelling some miles towards the city, he was overtaken, and carried back behind his master on his horse; but that, having threatened to "do it again," and do it more successfully next time he was beaten, things went a little better with him thereafter. That he had not seen or heard of the family since he left them, nor did he care to.

He added that he had called on my mother, who described to him the great amusement my freedom-suit had caused her and her friends in the city, and which she intended to preserve for my use, when that peculiar style of garments should become fashionable. His own suit, he said, was made on much the same model as mine, and was about the same amount of use to him.

From this time forward I lost sight of the Thomases and all their belongings.

Happening, in one of my visits to the United States, to be in Philadelphia, with a few spare days on my hands, I determined to fill up the time by a run up to Friendship, and thus gratify a long-cherished desire to look up and renew the acquaintance of my old friends, but more especially to satisfy a curiosity to know what changes had

taken place in the dozen years or more since I left them.

Accordingly, at six o'clock in the morning of an early winter's day, I found myself seated by the side of the driver of the four-horse stage leaving the city at that hour; for, although the winter season had begun, the weather was sufficiently mild for an outside seat. Fortunately, the day was fine also, and as the road we passed over, except a few miles out of the city, was the same as that followed by our wagon so many years before, every mile of it was familiar to me, and made doubly pleasant by the recollection of some scene or incident in that romantic journey.

It was not much of a disappointment to me, either, that the driver of the coach — like the generality of his class in the United States — was reserved and unsociable, or that the two chilly-looking individuals seated behind us were as silent and mysterious as a couple of mutes. I was much too full of my own reflections, too wrapped up in my own selfish enjoyment of the situation, to care a great deal for any one's company or conversation. Only on two or three occasions did the driver thaw sufficiently to drop a few words, and then returned to his oyster-like gravity, and spoke not any more.

At Germantown there was the old "Bird in Hand" inn,

> "Where *still* the sign-post caught the passing eye."

That sign-post, emblazoned with its picture of a countryman holding in his hand a captive bird, whilst close by, on a bush, sat another, singing defiance to all the farmers and bird-catchers in the world, and underneath, the legend:

> "A Bird in the Hand
> Is Worth Two in a Bush."

Here the little adventures of that first night passed on the floor of the inn came freshly and vividly before me again, and seemed to give to the place something more than a mere passing, common interest to me.

Now came the little wayside tavern, whose bar-room was adorned with the picture of the warlike Buonaparte, which had puzzled and bothered a generation of the house's guests. I ventured to ask the driver whether he had ever seen the mysterious print.

"What, that little picter of Napoleon betwixt the two trees? Ya-a-as; that 's nuthin'. That don't amount to a row of pins. Any fool can see through that," he answered, with a look of frigid contempt, that might be meant either for me or the picture.

I hardly knew whether to take this as a sign of popular progress since my cow-boy days, or whether I had not made a mistake in taking the Thomases as a criterion of the county's intelligence, but inclined to the latter opinion.

The appearance of occasional market-wagons, going cityward, reminded me that the morrow — Friday — was market-day at the yards. Thenceforward I closely scrutinized each as it passed, in hope of discovering some face familiar to me in the old days, possibly even Caleb Thomas himself. The graceful tossing of a horse's head, belonging to one wagon, as it approached, recalled the black mare, or the high, arched neck, heavy shoulders, and short, quick step of another, betokened the presence of her mate, the bay horse. A closer look, however, showed that neither the horses, nor their driver, nor the shiny-faced woman in the prim bonnet, by his side, bore the genuine stamp of the Thomases. A reciprocal stare was all that followed; and if they thought of me at all,

it was probably with that aversion which country folk so often feel for the pale-faced, well-dressed city man.

At length the old log-house, my first home in the country, was reached; but there was no sign of life about it now; no smoke curling gracefully, or otherwise, from its chimneys; no wood-pile in front, with its chips lying scattered about, and its ever-ready axe standing against the chopping-log. Nor did any woman's face appear at the window, to look at the stage as it went rattling by. But, notwithstanding the deserted appearance of the place, imagination quickly peopled it as it was when first I knew it, and scenes once so familiar to me, in which I was a prominent actor, passed rapidly before my eyes again. It is hardly too much to say that no building I have ever seen, before or since, has interested me half as much as did that humble log-house, as viewed from the top of the stage-coach.

A few minutes more, and Friendship itself, in all the glory of its one little street of white houses, was before me, unaltered and unimproved. Mary Morse's house was still there; but I saw no signs of a school, within or without. The other and larger school was enjoying its noonday vacation, and a number of boys, the exact counterparts of my old schoolmates, came running to the fence to see the stage come up, as the horn of the driver announced its approach.

Then came the "Three Tuns Inn," the stopping-place of our coach; and that part of my journey was at an end.

I trust I shall be pardoned, if I own to feeling just the least bit puffed up, as, standing in front of the inn, after dinner, I indulged in some reflections touching my former relations with the village, as one of its most humble citizens, and my then position as a traveller and a guest of

its principal hostelry. A satisfaction at having been raised from an inferior to a higher position in life seems a natural and excusable feeling, more especially when one is again, after a lapse of years, brought face to face with the scenes of one's former struggles. Such, I confess, was my own feeling, as I stood on the steps of the "Three Tuns," thinking of the days gone by, and picturing myself as I was in those days.

To saunter forth in the direction of the Thomases was my next object. I had not cared to make any inquiries about them, whether living or dead, for half the pleasure and sensation of the visit would have been lost, had I known what to expect when I reached their house. A little uncertainty and mystery would increase the interest and pleasure of the journey, I thought. The anticipation of seeing those people again, and hearing their voices, after a separation of so many years, and after mingling in a world so different from theirs, filled me with a strange emotion, that increased the nearer I got to them. After an hour's walk, the place itself was before me; but, instead of the old-fashioned, modest little farm-house, standing, in its retirement, away from the road, as I left it, there was an ugly, two-storied wooden house, painted a staring white, and only separated from the roadway by a narrow strip of garden. It looked as uncomfortable and out of place as a Quaker in a ball-room. In other respects I could see no changes.

The first living object that met my eyes, as I walked towards the back door of the house was a lanky boy, of about fourteen, at the wood-pile, gathering an armful of sticks for the house. The infant Joshua, as sure as fate, was the first idea that crossed my mind. I 'll speak to him

"Who lives here, bub?"

"Hey?" answered the infant, as he paused in his work to take a good stare at me.

"Who lives in this house?"

Then, as if doubtful whether he ought to give the information, and probably mistaking me for a peddler in the family Bible line, or something of that sort, he answered, somewhat gruffly:

"Caleb Thomas."

"Is he in the house?"

"No, he ain't. He 's down at the barn, or somewheres."

Whereupon I marched, without any further parley with the lad, boldly up to the kitchen-door, gave it a thump, and, without waiting for an answer, opened it.

"Can you tell me how far it is from here to Friendship?" I asked of the woman inside, who stood at the dough-trough with her arms buried to the elbows in flour.

"To Friendship! Why — it 's — abou—." Here she stopped, raised herself from the trough, looked me full in the face, as a smile came over her own, and said: "Why, it 's Henry Sellers! Why, Henry, how *does* thee do?"

And then, giving her hands a shake in the box, she sprang forward and grasped my hand, depositing therein enough flour and dough to make a small pattie.

"Oh, then you know me, do you?"

"Know thee! Why, Henry, I 'd a-knowed thee anywheres on earth. How glad I am to see thee! Where did thee come from?"

"I 've just come up from the city by the stage. Well, and how are you all; and how have you all been these many years?"

"Well, we 've ben putty well, Henry. Did thee see Caleb when thee come in?"

"No; but I saw Joshua there at the wood-pile."

"No, Henry; that ain't Joshu-a. Our little boy died very young. We could n't raise him, all we could do. He was too delicate to live."

By this time the boy, with an armful of fuel, was at the door, and Rachel and I had gone into the parlor. My allusion to Joshua, with the memories it probably awakened, brought a cloud temporarily over her face and spirits. Then, as her cheerfulness returned, she chatted away with great liveliness about everything and everybody that she thought in any way interested me, varying her voice and manner according as the subject was pleasing or sad.

"Now, Henry," she said, in an undertone, "I 'll send for Caleb to come in, and we 'll see if he knows thee. Don't thee let on. Here, Sam; go and tell uncle a man 's here that wants to know the way to Allentown. Tell him to come quick, as the man 's in a hurry."

"Who is Sam?" I asked, as the lad left the house, casting back an inquisitive look at me as he went.

"He 's a boy we got from the city, Henry, when he was on'y six year old. We act jist the same to him as if he was our own. He allers calls us Aunty and Uncle. He has n't no father nor no mother of his own, and I don't suppose he 'll ever leave us now. We ain't obleeged to work and worry like we did when thee was with us. Thee knows we was on'y startin' in the world then, and had to work very hard. Now we 're a little better off than we was."

"Yes; we all of us had a roughish time of it in those

days, had n't we? I 'm afraid you all work harder than is good for you about here, or at least you used to do."

"Ah, we don't do that no longer, Henry, though we do pretty well in that way as it is, I know. Me and Martha has allers said my brother Joshu-a killed hisself with too much work."

"Then is Joshua dead?"

"Yes, Henry; he died about five or six years ago."

"And Martha, where is she?"

"Martha is married to Jacob Wright. Thee recollect Jacob, don't thee? He lived on the farm next to us, across the creek."

"Yes, yes; I remember; he was the man that used to thrash his horses so badly, and swear so we could hear him away at our place. Oh, I shall never forget him. Why, he was going to marry her when I first came to you, I always thought! Have they any children?"

"No; they never had no children."

Caleb now came lolling in, and it was evident from his looks that he did not half believe the message sent to him. He appeared much older than he really was, and his face bore signs of sorrow and care. But he no sooner caught sight of me, sitting with Rachel, than his expression suddenly changed. He broke into a quiet chuckle as he sidled up towards me and said:

"If that there man wants to go ter Allentown, I 'll eat my head!"

And then he began to scratch his head as if to prove he was in earnest, and ready to carry out his wager if need be.

Caleb seemed truly pleased to see me again. He said he had often spoken about me, and felt sure that one day or another I would turn up just when I was least expected,

as it had happened; that although they had lost sight of me, they had not forgotten me. Then, after a few moments' chat, Rachel said:

"Now, Henry, if thee'd like to go with Caleb to the barn, or wait here awhile, I'll finish my bread and then git supper ready, and then thee can tell us all about theeself. Caley, thee must send Sam over to the 'Three Tuns' for Henry's things. I won't have him stay nowheres else but here."

The travelling-bag was accordingly brought from the stage-house, and I once more found myself, for the time being, a member of the Thomas family, but this time a guest, and not an apprentice.

At the barn I inquired first about my old friend, the dog, whom I had left in such evil repute.

"Oh, I was obleeged to kill him at last," Caleb said. "He got all right agin after thee left here, but he took to worryin' the sheep the fust chance he got; so I hed to shoot him. That there little tarrier thee seen in the kitchen is the on'y dog we've ever hed since then."

"And the horses? I don't see either of our old ones here."

"No; the mare got very old, and she died only a month or two ago, and the horse I traded off for that colt there."

"I forgot to ask Rachel about Joshua's boy, Dick. What became of him?"

"Dick went to the city not long after thee went, and from there he went to sea. I believe he's still a sailor, but we never hear nothin' about him now."

Caleb's manner, I found, had lost a good deal of its old asperity and doggedness, and become softer — not to say sad — like a man who had seen trouble.

Presently we returned to the house, where we found Rachel busy with her preparations for our evening meal. All the resources of the house were taxed to furnish the table that evening, for she had set her mind on making my visit as agreeable to me as she knew how. The table was spread in the best room instead of the kitchen, and the four of us sat down together. By this time the lad had learned who I was, and it was curious to watch the eager expression of his face, as he listened to every word I spoke. Nothing seemed to escape him that I said or did. He evidently regarded me as the first of the line of cow-boys of which he was the then living representative.

He was also a study for me, for in him I seemed to see the reflection of my former self — the inheritor of my place and honors. But circumstances had changed since I left the Thomases, and whether it was that age had softened and humanized them, or that mercy and fair treatment were found to be the best economy, it was plain that their present boy was better and more liberally treated, clothed, and fed than I had been.

Whether Sam, like his predecessors, had had the benefit of the *switch* in his training I did not learn, but he was apparently under no fear of it then. Both Caleb and Rachel, and especially the latter, were anxious that these changes should not escape my notice. As if conscious that they had not done their duty by me, Rachel never tired of talking about their past and present circumstances, and the necessity that drove them at one time to do many things they were happily free from then. It was in this light I read her answer to my first inquiry about the boy, when he was sent to the barn to fetch his "uncle."

At the supper-table the conversation was chiefly carried

on by Rachel and me, Caleb, following his ancient habit, taking but little part in it.

First, I had to give an account of myself and my doings since my apprenticeship; how that I had been sent for by some near relations in New York, and placed by them in a mercantile house as junior clerk; how, after being there and in other situations about five years, I had been sent by a firm to England as their agent, where I still resided, but returned occasionally to the United States. All these and many other particulars relating to myself, my business and family connections, my future prospects and intentions, were eagerly listened to. Then, dropping myself and my affairs, I once or twice essayed to draw their attention to and interest them in the country I lived in, and more especially the great capital, London, concerning which I volunteered to give some striking statistics as to its immense size, population, etc. But the subject did not interest them; and so, finding no encouragement to go on and enlighten them, I said no more about it. Geography was not a strong point either with Caleb or Rachel, and their knowledge of foreign countries was of the most limited and hazy description. In like manner, later on, I branched off into English agriculture, supposing that subject at least, with many facts I had picked up in reference to farms and farming in England, would interest Caleb and awaken in him a spirit of inquiry and discussion. Not so, however; he did not care anything about it! And when I thought to surprise him with an account of the heavy manuring and deep ploughing on farms there, he only answered that it was no more than they did themselves in Bucks County!

A statement once made in his hearing by an English emigrant who worked in his neighborhood, to the effect

that four tons of hay was a common load for a farm-horse in England, had made him incredulous about everything relating to that country.

So, failing in my attempts to divert them with such general topics, the talk relapsed into mere personal matters. One of my first inquiries was about my old companion and successor, Charley Donovan, who, Rachel informed me, died of consumption not long after he returned to the city. She grew quite pathetic when speaking of him, as though a loss which only a very long time could efface or repair.

"Charley was a good boy, Henry, and we got very fond of each other. He did n't like leavin' here at all at the last; and he often used to say: 'Well, Aunty, if I don't like my new place in the city, when I go there, you 'll soon see me back agin.' I told him, as I told thee when thee left us, that he should never want for a home as long as I was alive. I often tell Caley that thee and Charley was two of the best boys we ever had. When Caleb come back from Feladelphy and told me that poor Charley was dead, Henry, I was so stagnated that I thought I would never be myself agin."

"Charley was a very good boy. Him and me allers got on very well together," was Caleb's eulogy of his old apprentice; for, hearing his wife's praises, he felt himself bound to add something to them.

"And I suppose you have had other boys, since we left, besides our friend Samuel here?"

"Oh, yes, Henry, we had four or five other boys; but on'y one of 'em stopped any time. He was a very good boy. He often comes to see us in the summer time."

And then Rachel entered into a detailed account of the

several lads they had got from the city on trial, from which it was plain to be seen that rebelliousness, pure and simple, was the trouble with most of them. Two of the boys — one an apprentice — she admitted had run away.

"What ever became of Jim Jimison? I should very much like to see Jim again."

"Jim went away to the West somewheres, not long after thee left us; but he has n't been heerd of since. He never got on well here, Jim did n't."

"No; and I guess Jim 'll never do much good nowheres," added Caleb.

"I suppose Dr. Smiley's daughter, Carrie, is long ago married?"

"Oh, yes; Carrie got married to a young lawyer that come up from the city, — a friend of her father's, — and they went out to Ohio together. She has often ben home since then; but I have on'y seen her oncst."

Talk of this kind filled up the evening until bed-time, when I had got full particulars of the fate, or the whereabouts, of all my old acquaintances.

"Caley," said Rachel, as she was about to show me to my bed-room, "why can't thee putt the horse in the cheer to-morrer, and take Henry around to see some of his old friends?"

"Yes, I 'll take him; or maybe thee 'd like to go with him. He can drive if he tries, I reckon; can't thee, Henry?"

"Oh, yes; but perhaps it 's hardly worth while to put you to all that trouble. I thought of going to meeting on First-day, when I can see many of them there, though I dare say they 've all forgotten me by this time. To-morrow I shall walk quietly down to the village, and call on Deborah Penrose and one or two others."

Then bidding Caleb and the lad good-night, I followed Rachel up-stairs. The best bed-room had been prepared for me, with all the comfort and luxury the house afforded, and with many unnecessary apologies for the absence of others in no way needed. Sandwiched between the two soft feather-beds, I gave myself up to reflection, and thought of the difference between my reception then and my first introduction to farming life, when a shake-down bed, in a loft filled with onions, dried apples, flour, dried pumpkins, boxes, and sacks, was thought a very proper and suitable place for me. Reflection, however, soon gave way to sleep, and the scenes and events of the real, living world gradually dissolved themselves into the less substantial ones of the land of dreams.

The two following days — Friday and Saturday — were spent in calling upon such of my old acquaintances as were still alive, or who had not left the neighborhood. Among these was Sister Martha. When, at the breakfast-table, I spoke of going to see her, Caleb said:

"Well, if thee 's a-goin' to see Martha, I reckon thee 'd better take Rachel's dinner-horn with thee to speak to her, as she 's about as deef as a barn-door."

"Oh, she has lost her hearing then, has she?"

"Yes, Henry, Martha's got to be very deef, and thee 'll have to speak to her very loud. And her eyes ain't good for much now, neither; but I guess she 'll know thee when she sees thee," Rachel answered.

And so she did; for had I been a long lost son or brother, providentially restored to the bosom of my family, she could not have been more overjoyed than she was on seeing me.

"Why, if it ain't Henry Sellers! Why, Henry, who ever would have expected to see thee?" Then, putting

her hand to her ear to catch my answer, she said: "I've got to be very hard o' hearin', Henry; thee must speak loud."

I at once braced myself up for the effort, and fairly screamed in her ear:

"I could n't stop away any longer. I've been dying to see you all."

"What did thee say, Henry?"

Taking a fresh inspiration, preparatory to another trial, I went at it again:

"I said — as you would n't — come to see me — I must come — and see you."

"Oh! thee 's a-goin' away to sea, is thee?"

"Yes."

"Why, thee ain't a sailor, is thee, Henry?"

"No; I 'm going to Liverpool — that 's all. How is Jacob?"

Catching the last inquiry, she informed me that Jacob was well; that he was not at home, but would be mighty glad to see me when he got back in the evening; that she hoped I had come to stay a few days with them, for, unless I did, Jacob would be most grievously disappointed, and she herself would be much hurt by my refusal.

But pleading want of time, and promising to accept her hospitality when next I came that way, I was glad of any excuse, after a few more fruitless efforts to make myself understood, to cut the interview short, and preserve my voice and lungs from further damage by this screaming scene. Caleb had not much exaggerated his sister-in-law's infirmity, in speaking of her "deefness," though it is doubtful if his suggestion about the dinner-horn would have been the most practicable way of meeting it.

On Sunday morning the horse was put to the gig, and

I drove Rachel to meeting. There had been a fall of snow in the night, and the weather was colder and decidedly wintry. Already a small group of male worshippers had assembled at the shed before the hour of service; and it was quite apparent that the appearance of a stranger in Caleb Thomas's gig was made the subject of much speculation and curiosity among them. They were not long kept in suspense, however, for as soon as I had deposited Rachel at the door, and made my horse fast under the shed, I walked straight up to the group, and, shaking hands with one of them, said:

"Well, Isaac, how do you do?"

"Thee 's got the advantage of me this time. I don't seem to know thee," answered the astonished Isaac, at the same time giving my hand a hearty grip.

All the company, including Isaac, smiled and wondered at the strange greeting, while a few of them already began to show signs of recognizing me as an old acquaintance.

"You ought to remember me, too. We 've had business together before now, though it is a good many years ago."

"Oh, indeed! I hope it turned out satisfactory to thee, though I can't say I remember it."

"Yes, the recollection of it will always be a satisfaction to me. You performed a miracle on me. You got me into a smaller suit of clothes than any other man in the United States could have done."

A good round laugh followed this doubtful compliment to Isaac's professional skill, and the reference to my grotesque outfit at once recalled the transaction, as well as myself, to his mind.

A general and familiar talk now took place among us, mostly pertaining to myself and my movements since I

left the village. The mention of London as my home lent a great zest and interest to the conversation, and, whilst giving to myself an undue and short-lived importance, afforded a little mild sensation to my rustic and untravelled friends. From Friendship to London was a long step, which none there had ever yet taken; and a person like myself, known to most of them, coming fresh from the great city, and about to return there, would naturally be a welcome visitor.

Unlike the Thomases, many of those present had read a great deal about England, and took an intelligent interest in all that transpired there, more especially in international questions at that time pending, which threatened the peace of the two countries.

Inside, the meeting presented a somewhat different appearance from the old days, for, although there was no mistaking the character of the assemblage, it was not so strictly Quakerish in dress as before. In the dozen years or so since I was last there the fashions of the world had made visible inroads on the plain and simple tastes of at least the younger members of the Society.

Seated round the stove, at their end of the room, were a number of the elderly women, warming or drying their feet after a walk through the snow. Among others I recognized there was Mistress Mary Morse, whose benevolent face was conspicuous, notwithstanding the ravages time had made in it. These good women, like their brethren at the shed, were not a little amazed, when the service was over, at seeing me advance towards the stove and offer my hand to my old schoolmistress. I confess to having felt a little humbled on finding that the pleasure of the scholar was not reciprocated by the mistress; for, although she received me with much courtesy, she did not

know me, nor even remember my name. Difference of age, as well, perhaps, as the small importance she attached to school reminiscences, compared to what I did, would account for this. But, for all that, to stand in the midst of a crowd of inquisitive women, claiming an acquaintance that was not acknowledged, was a little trying and uncomfortable! After a few nervous and feeble attempts to fix my identity, without effect, I said playfully:

"Well, perhaps I ought to feel pleased that you *have* forgotten me, after the disgrace I brought on your school by introducing pugilism there. If you forget that, I don't forget the useful lesson you gave me and Master Kauffman at the time he provoked me to a fight."

"Oh, yes, yes; now thee mentions that, I remember thee very well! How has thee been since thee went away from here?"

"Very well. I am sorry to hear you have given up your school. I was foolish enough to think I should come back here and find you in your old place where I left you; but I see even Friendship is moving and changing with the rest of the world, at least in some respects."

"Yes; we are moving, I hope, in the right direction; but I am not so sure of that. Does thee make a long stay here?"

After answering the good lady's question, and giving a brief account of myself and my doings since I had last seen her, I bade her what I felt must be a final, and I had almost said an affectionate, farewell.

A couple of days more with the Thomases brought my visit to a close. I had seen and spoken to all that remained of those in the neighborhood I cared anything about, and had visited all the scenes and places in any way interesting to me.

I must do my old master and mistress the justice to say that not only did they do their best, by kindness and hospitality, to wipe out the recollection of their past shortcomings to me, but gave many proofs, in their treatment of the lad then under them, of a change for the better since I left them.

So, with many assurances from Rachel of undying friendship and regard, we once more bade each other adieu. Caleb drove me to the "Three Tuns," where, taking my place in the stage, I turned my back on the little village of Friendship, and my face towards the good "City of Brotherly Love."

THE END.